

REFUTING RABBINIC OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY & MESSIANIC PROPHECIES



EITAN BAR

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~ *Refuting Rabbinic Objections to Christianity and
Messianic Prophecies* ~

by Eitan Bar

Dedicated to all other Jewish believers in Yeshua.

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Special Thanks to Dr. Michael Brown who without knowing, gave me the passion for Jewish Evangelism and Apologetics.

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ONE FOR ISRAEL

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PREFACE

For those of us Jews who grew up in Israel, Jesus and His word were never part of the conversation. Not in our school system, not in our synagogues, and not in our media. Nor do we have easy access to the New Testament. Jesus has been studiously avoided, and hidden from our people. Today in Israel, 99.7% of the Jewish population are rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. How did our country, where the gospel began, come to be so adamantly against it?

Within Judaism over the past two millennia, any kind of spiritual message had to go through the “gatekeepers”, the Orthodox Jewish Rabbis. The Rabbinic Judaism of the Orthodox comes directly from the sect of the “Pharisees”, whom Jesus rebuked:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”
(Matthew 23:13)

Ever since the days of Messiah, the Rabbis have set themselves in opposition to the gospel, blocking the message of Jesus from Israel. They deliberately prevent Jewish people from hearing about the free salvation offered to them in the death and resurrection of their own Jewish Messiah. They have gone to great lengths to conceal Jesus, and they have made him the best kept secret in Judaism, keeping our people in spiritual darkness.

But now the secret is out!

After almost 2000 years, Jesus, or as we call him in Hebrew, Yeshua, can no longer be hidden from the people! Today, our ministry, ONE FOR ISRAEL, reaches Jewish and Arab Israelis exactly where they are – online. We no longer need the rabbis’ permission for anything. We can go straight

into the smartphones, tablets, and computers of every Israeli, sharing the saving good news of Yeshua the Messiah!

In the past, the message of the gospel came to Israel from outside our borders, delivered by people who didn't understand our language, our culture, our heritage or our way of thinking. Today the messengers look very different. Now it is Jewish and Arab Israelis who are bringing the gospel back to where it started – back to our own people Israel. We can explain the gospel to our people in a way that makes sense to them, in our own native tongues of Hebrew and Arabic as only Israelis can, and help our people understand who Yeshua really is.

The Orthodox rabbis in Israel operate an “anti-missionary” organization called *Yad L'Achim*, specifically to fight against the spread of the gospel among the Jewish people. This very well-funded organization, works closely with the Minister of Interior in the Israeli government (According to guidestar.org.il, *Yad L'Achim* raised over 22 million ILS in 2016). They seek to prevent Jewish people from leaving the confines of Rabbinic Judaism by any means necessary (not always legally), and relentlessly persecute us, the Israeli Jewish believers in Jesus. With over 90% of the names, photos and addresses of all the Messianic Jews in Israel on file, *Yad L'Achim* began sending a magazine called “Searching” to the homes of believers in Israel back in 2014. The magazine contains objections and refutations from Orthodox rabbis about the messiahship of Jesus and the credibility of the New Testament, trying to ridicule and destroy belief in Jesus. This caused several Jewish believers, even some who had been missionaries, to deny their faith in Jesus and revert to rabbinic Judaism.

Over the past five years, I decided to go over all of their magazines, books and videos, in order to answer their arguments and prove their objections false. Since 2015 we have released about 150 short videos where we share the gospel and directly refute these rabbinic objections to Jesus, New Testament and Christianity. This book is a compilation of transcripts from those videos, all in one place for your consideration. While the content of this book is based on five years of academic research, I did my best to write it in a light, simple, easy-to-read way, in order to keep this book as short as possible.

A favor I would like to ask of you is to please SHARE this book with others on social media, and also write a positive review on Amazon – which will advance and promote the book so that others, both seeking Jews and born-again believers, may be blessed!



Part One: Messianic Prophesies

(Jesus in the Old Testament)

Chapter 1

Messianic Prophecies What Are They?

“Hundreds of thousands of Jews around the world and tens of thousands in Israel have dared to read, explore and check for themselves, no longer blindly believing in mystical fables.”

As far as the Rabbinic Halacha (Jewish Tradition) is concerned, Jesus is a false prophet who tried to lead the nation of Israel astray to worship other Gods. It's important to understand that the Rabbinic Talmud casually tries to wipe out the very possibility that Jesus is the Messiah. In Tractate Gittin in the Talmud, a fable was written hundreds of years after Jesus, in which Jesus was allegedly conjured up and admitted that He was a false prophet. When Onkelos asked Him what His punishment was, Jesus allegedly replied: “With boiling hot excrement, since whoever mocks at the words of the Sages [rabbis] is punished with boiling hot excrement” [Tractate Gittin 57]. According to the Talmud, whoever fails to blindly follow the Rabbis' laws is punished with boiling hot excrement in hell for all eternity. This fable was meant to intimidate the commoners, lest they dare examine on their own what Jesus had to say on the one hand, or rise up against the rabbinic authority on the other.

IN THIS “INFORMATION AGE” LIMITED ACCESS TO INFORMATION IS OVER

For many centuries before the information age, people had no direct access to the Bible even if they knew how to read and write. Instead they had to rely on what the religious leaders told them. However, in the twenty-first century, doorways to information are wide open through printing houses and of course the internet. Even though the rabbis try to prohibit use of the Internet, a powerful spiritual awakening is stirring among the Jewish people. Hundreds of thousands of Jews around the world and tens of thousands in Israel have dared to read, explore and check for themselves, no longer blindly believing in mystical fables. Many have discovered that Jesus is indeed their Jewish Messiah.

Since the rabbis have rejected the Messiah, the concept of Messiah in modern Judaism is no longer based on the Old Testament, but rather on various rabbinic traditions they formulated themselves. They have declared that their traditions are the “Oral Law” (claiming they were given by God at Sinai verbally, along with the written commandments of the Bible). However, these traditions have caused a lot of confusion and conflict regarding the identity of the Messiah, even among the rabbis themselves. Jews truly wish to know who the Messiah is. There's a need to set rabbinic traditions aside and go directly to the source: The Old Testament.

The Old Testament contains a complete ID kit so that the people of Israel can recognize the Messiah and put their faith in Him. Even the Sages admitted: “All the prophets prophesied only towards the Messianic era” [Tractate Sanhedrin 99a, free translation from Hebrew].

HOW MESSIANIC PROPHECY WORKS

Chapters 44 and 45 of the book of Isaiah were written around 700 BC. Isaiah prophesied and mentioned Cyrus by name. He prophesied that Cyrus would allow Israel to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. When the prophecy was written, Jerusalem and the Temple were still intact and Cyrus was not yet born. Over 100 years later (586 BC), Jerusalem was conquered and destroyed by the Babylonians. Later, when the Persians conquered Babylon,

King Cyrus of Persia issued his decree to rebuild the city and the Temple. All this happened nearly 160 years after Isaiah made his prophecy. In the same way, the Old Testament also contains future prophecies about the Messiah's nature and identity to help His people recognize Him.

Another type of prophecy which is very much in use in the Bible is called "parallelism", I will expand on that with an example in Chapter 10 ("Parallels Between Joseph And David That Point To The Messiah").

By the way, these prophecies were given to the people of Israel in order for them to examine each "candidate" according to these criteria. The problem is that 2000 years ago all of the scrolls documenting Israel's family lineages were destroyed along with the Temple. Therefore, ever since the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, we can no longer know who is truly a descendant of David. This is a serious problem for the rabbis... but it's not a problem if the Messiah came before 70 AD.

The lineage of the Messiah? The Messiah, according to 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17, must be a descendant of David. And indeed, Jesus' mother comes from the House of David.

The birthplace of the Messiah? Micah 5 predicts that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, where Jesus was indeed born.

The time of His (first) coming? Daniel 9 predicts that the Messiah will come before the destruction of the second Temple and that in the year 32 CE He will be sentenced to a violent death. Indeed, Jesus was crucified on 14 Nissan in the year 32 CE.

The nature of the Messiah's birth? Like many of the heroes in the Bible who were supernaturally born by barren women, Isaiah prophesied in chapter 7 that the birth of the Messiah would be supernatural, from a virgin maiden. The New Testament describes Jesus' birth from his mother Miriam, who was a virgin maiden.

What will be the nature of the Messiah? According to Daniel 7, Isaiah 9 and Zechariah 12, the nature of the Messiah will be like the nature

of God Himself: The embodiment of God to mankind. And indeed, the New Testament refers to Jesus as the “Son of God”, one with God and the embodiment of God. Just like “Metatron”, whose character is described hundreds of years after Jesus in the writings of Jewish mysticism and in the Zohar.

Where will the Messiah live? According to Zechariah 9, the Messiah is to enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey. This teaches us two things: First, the Messiah won’t be some well-born famous rabbi who has millions. Second, he will live in the land of Israel, as he will be riding into Jerusalem on a donkey’s back. Merely for the sake of comparison: Chabad’s “King Messiah”, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, whose yellow posters are plastered on every street corner in Israel, was not only not born in Bethlehem, but he never even set foot in either Jerusalem or in Israel. Jesus, unlike the Lubavitcher Rebbe, was born and raised in Israel and did enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

What will He do? According to Isaiah chapter 35 as well as other prophets in the Old Testament, the Messiah will cure incurable diseases, open the eyes of the blind, heal the disabled, cleanse the lepers, open the ears of the deaf, unbind the tongues of the mute, exorcise demons and even resurrect the dead. And indeed, Jesus cured countless people, exorcised evil spirits and raised the dead.

Ironically, according to the Talmud, the rabbis themselves admit to the supernatural powers demonstrated by Jesus and His disciples. However, according to them, the miracles were brought about through satanic magical powers. For example, consider what Rabbi Daniel Asor had to say: “Jesus was a false prophet, for he acted only through sorcery. He himself is the embodiment of Satanism.” In reality, even during Jesus’ lifetime, the rabbis accused Him of performing his supernatural miracles by the power of Satan and in Satan’s name. However, Jesus easily refuted their claims when He answered them: *“Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself”* (Matthew 12:25-26).

The response of Israel and the Gentiles? This was also prophesied in advance. According to Isaiah chapter 53 and Psalm 22, the Messiah was to be rejected by His own people as they degraded Him and led Him to His death. And what about the Gentiles? The book of Jonah makes it clear: The God of Israel does not belong to or is not limited only to the nation of Israel, as taught by Rabbinic Halacha. Rather, he loves all of his creation. Yes yes, even the Gentiles. Just like rabbis nowadays, Jonah the prophet had difficulties accepting this message. But, just as God promised Abraham that from his seed would come a blessing to all Gentiles, the Messiah was indeed the “stone that the builders rejected” as prophesied in Psalm 118, but the one that God chose to be the cornerstone. Jesus was made the main foundation stone on which God built up and sent out the blessing He had promised to all other nations around the world. Since Jesus’ time to this day, millions of Christians believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! Thanks to whom? To the rabbis? No. To Jesus, of course.

What about His death? And the purpose for which He came?

According to Psalm 22, Isaiah 53 and Zechariah 12, the people of Israel will pierce Him and lead Him to His death by crucifixion, without realizing that they’ve actually pierced the Messiah. But in His grace, God will use that misguided action to inflict the sins and trespasses of all mankind upon His Son. And indeed, Jesus was crucified as a sacrifice in order to atone for our sins.

These were just a few examples out of hundreds of prophecies and parallels in the Bible regarding the Messiah’s character, nature and identity. This should be enough to whet anyone’s appetite but the entire witness of Old Testament prophecy is something every seeker of truth should think about seriously and prayerfully. Statistically speaking, the probability that these examples are mere coincidences, luck, or self-fulfilling prophecies is outright impossible. For sake of argument, let’s only take three of these messianic prophecies which should withstand scrutiny by any truthful observer:

1. He will be Jewish
2. He will be born in Bethlehem
3. He will die in the year 32 AD

Even if one ignores all the other prophecies for a moment and concentrates on those three alone, only a handful of Messiah candidates might stand.

Now comes the challenge as the reader examines the following prophecies, starting with the next chapter: Forget man-made traditions, ceremonies, or any other religious rituals that aim to impress God as your basis for truth. In this information age, with doors wide open to ancient manuscripts and countless sources for cross-referencing to check facts, is it right for some rabbi or priest to decide for the people what they should and shouldn't think? God created His people with a mind and a healthy measure of logic to help them evaluate Bible prophecies for themselves. After all, up there, no rabbi (or priest) will be around to hold anyone's hand. Up there, it's just between you and God.



Chapter 2

Psalm 22 – The Prophecy About The Crucified Messiah

Originally, the text read: “They have mined (bored holes) in my hands and feet.”

Meaning, they have pierced my hands and my feet.

Psalms 22: Possibly the most famous prophetic psalm about the Messiah! Much like Isaiah 53, it describes the Messiah's torment, rejection and death:

“To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David. My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?” (Psalm 22:1-2).

Son of David: Like Joseph, King David serves as a prototype of the Messiah. Therefore, many refer to the Messiah as the Son of David. And King David, who wrote Psalm 22 under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, predicted that the Messiah - who would be his descendant - would suffer, be rejected and killed. The New Testament says that when Jesus was on the cross, He cried out to his people in reference to this psalm 22, *“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” That is: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* (Matthew 27:46). While God and the Messiah are “connected” to one another, this psalm foretells how God had to separate from the Messiah. God turns His face away from the Messiah so that, as he dies, He may take the sins of Israel and of all mankind upon Himself.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.” (Psalms 22:1-2).

God does not save the Messiah from the wicked ones, but rather remains silent in the face of the injustice, the suffering and the torture that He endures.

Rashi (who was a famous Jewish sage) gave his commentary on this verse: “Why have You forsaken me?: They are destined to go into exile, and David recited this prayer for the future” (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki). Even Rashi could see that this psalm is a prophecy about the future and not just some past experience of David.

“Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame” (Psalms 22:3-5).

These verses serve as a reminder that God had already saved “our fathers”, who cried to him. This means that He is capable of saving, yet chooses not to save the Messiah. He has a special reason for doing this.

“But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; He trusts in the Lord; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, for He delights in him!” (Psalm 22:6-8).

Now these verses describe, using similar terms to those also found in Isaiah 53, the scorn and derision towards the Messiah by all those around him, who merely saw him as something harmful that they must get rid of. They made him feel like a worm, and not a man. His own people humiliated him and were ashamed of him.

The Suffering Messiah Ben-Yosef (Son of Joseph): Remember the story of Joseph? His brothers mocked him, hated him, tried to get rid of him and tossed him in a pit. Joseph was rejected by his own people and delivered into the hands of Gentiles. He was presumed dead and forgotten as if he was irrelevant. Meanwhile, Joseph was welcomed among the Gentiles and became a great and important leader as he performed wonders and miracles among them. The story ends well, as Joseph is eventually welcomed back within his own people. In the same way, Jesus was humiliated and rejected by our people Israel, delivered to the Romans and left for dead. Later, He was welcomed by Gentiles and became a great and important leader, and one day Jesus too will be welcomed back by our people, as a long lost brother!

“Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother’s

womb you have been my God. Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help” (Psalm 22:9-11).

God forsakes the Messiah. The Messiah’s trust is not in people, but in God, and has been from the beginning. However, God is not there in His time of trouble. Interestingly, even here like the rest of the biblical prophecies about the Messiah, only the Messiah’s mother is mentioned, there is no human father mentioned.

“Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; They open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water; and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; You lay me in the dust of death.” (Psalm 22:12-15).

It’s interesting to see that the famous Jewish Midrash from the 8th century, “Pesikta Rabbati” interprets and puts some of the words of this psalm – on the lips of the suffering Messiah: “It was because of the ordeal of the son of David that David wept, saying, ‘My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.’ ” (Midrash Pesikta Rabbati on Psalm 22). This Midrash understands that David described the future suffering and death of the Messiah, son of David. Evil people surrounded Him, as dogs encircle their prey.

“For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; Like a lion are my hands and feet” (Psalm 22:16).

And now, here comes the interesting part! For the past millennia, all Hebrew bibles say: “Like a lion are my hands and feet.” Or, in other words: my hands and my feet are like those of a lion. It doesn’t seem to make a lot of sense, does it? 1,000 years ago, the Masoretes who made the “Masoretic text” that Israelis all use today, changed one single letter in this verse:

They shortened the letter VAV (ו) into the letter YUD (י).



Originally, the text actually read: “They have mined (bore a hole) in my hands and feet,” Meaning, they have pierced my hands and my feet. The original Hebrew word means to mine or bore, to make a hole or dig a pit. Like mining a hole in the ground or digging a well. According to Bar-Ilan University’s Biblical Hebrew Dictionary the meaning of “mine” is the same as “dig.” This is reinforced in various places throughout the Old Testament. For example, in Exodus 21:33 or in 2 Chronicles 16:14. However, seeing as this description of boring holes in the Messiah’s hands and feet sounded a little too much like Jesus for the rabbis, they decided to shorten the letter VAV (ו) to become the letter YUD (י). Any person who reads any ancient version of the Old Testament, such as the Septuagint or the Dead Sea Scrolls, will see for themselves that the original text doesn’t say “like a lion”, but rather “they have bored / pierced.” The Dead Sea Scrolls, dated hundreds of years before the time of Jesus or as in the New Testament, were written *at least* 1,200 years prior to the Masoretic text.

That description is remarkably similar to the one in Zechariah 12, verse 10: “*When they look on me, on Him whom they have pierced*” as well as to the description in Isaiah 53 where the Messiah is said to be “*pierced for our transgressions*” (Isaiah 53:5). More detailed information on Psalm 22 can be found at www.oneforisrael.org. Learn more about the rest of the chapter on our website, or just read the rest of the psalm on your own. It goes on to

describe the rejection, suffering and death of the Messiah, who served as a sacrifice and atonement for our sins.

The Jewish Sages contemplate Psalm 22: Even the Jewish Sages recognized and admitted that Psalm 22 was a prophetic psalm about the Messiah. In fact, Rashi explains verse 27 as referring: “To the time of redemption, to the days of the Messiah.” (Rashi’s commentary on Psalm 22:27).

Important rabbinic Midrash written before the Masoretic text: “During the seven year period preceding the coming of the son of David, Iron beams will be brought low and loaded upon His neck until the Messiah’s body is bent low. Then He will cry and weep, and His voice will rise to the very height of heaven, and He will say to God: Master of the universe, how much can my strength endure? How much can my spirit endure? How much my breath before it ceases? How much can my limbs suffer? Am I not flesh and blood? ... During the ordeal of the son of David the Holy One, blessed be He, will say to him: Ephraim, My true Messiah, Long ago, ever since the six days of creation, thou didst take this ordeal upon thyself. At this moment, thy pain is like my pain. At these words, the Messiah will reply: ‘Master of the Universe, now I am reconciled. The servant is content to be like his Master.’” (Midrash Pesikta Rabbati, 36:2).

The Midrash goes on to clarify: “Ephraim, our true Messiah, even though we are thy forbears, thou art greater than we, because thou didst suffer for the iniquities of our children, and terrible ordeals befell thee. For Israel thou didst become a laughingstock and a derision among the nations of the earth; And didst sit in darkness, in thick darkness, and thine eyes saw no light and thy skin cleaved to thy bones, and thy body was as dry as a piece of wood; and thine eyes grew dim from fasting, and thy strength was dried up like a potsherd (Psalm 22:16), All these afflictions on account of the iniquities of our children.” (Pesikta Rabbati 37:137).

When one properly understands Psalm 22, the true Messiah and Savior can be easily discerned. It describes one who has suffered unbearable agony, pierced in his hands and feet, tortured and killed, but then rose from the dead. King David wasn’t referring to himself - even the rabbis agree about that. He died as an old man, in the arms of Avishag the Shunamite, not being tortured

and humiliated. However, Jesus endured rejection, agony, humiliation and death. And just as King David stood alone before Goliath and fought him in the name of the people of Israel, Jesus stood alone before death, in order to represent the people of Israel, and all mankind. However, unlike David, Jesus not only risked His own life for His people, but He GAVE His life – for us all!



Before you continue with my book, I have a small but important favor to ask. The rabbis won't be recommending this book to their Jewish students, but the more positive reviews on Amazon, the more Amazon will expose this book and make it widely available. So I am asking for your quick help - to write a short positive review on Amazon. This will also help me find a publisher to print the book! Would you please take 60 seconds right now to rate and write a short review on the [book's page on Amazon](#)? (goodreads.com will be great as well). I promise to read it! And, you can always edit your review in the future if you feel you need to!

It would also be a great blessing if you can SHARE the link to this book on your social media profile.

- Eitan Bar

Chapter 3

The Pierced Messiah

Zechariah 12:10

From suffering Messiah to conquering Messiah

Those huge crosses inside big churches.... For Jewish people, the cross today is mostly identified as the symbol of Catholicism. But what if you were told that the idea of a Messiah nailed to a cross comes from the Hebrew Scriptures? What if you were told that Zechariah, the prophet who lived and prophesied around about 600 BC, predicted that the Messiah would be rejected, pierced and killed by His own people?

Zechariah, who immigrated from the diaspora, prophesied in chapter 12 about a time at the End of Days during which the people of Israel would return to the Land of Israel. They will be the focus of global attention and that the hatred towards the people of Israel will intensify, which will eventually lead to many nations attacking the Jewish people in an all-inclusive war.

“On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it” (Zechariah 12:3-4).

To the rest of the nations, Israel will feel like some heavy, troublesome stone. So much so, that they will grow tired of Israel's existence. Sounds a bit too familiar, doesn't it? Zechariah describes the people of Israel as living back in the Land of Israel, surrounded by many enemies gathered against it, shrouded in fear. And once there are no longer any allies to rely on, the people of Israel will finally remember God and turn to Him, pleading for help. How typical ... only remembering God when looking death in the eye. Zechariah goes on to prophesy:

“On that day the Lord will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the Lord going before them. And in that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem” (Zechariah 12:8-9).

God promises that in the day when all Israel's enemies gather against them, He Himself will intervene. However, God's intervention is going to go far beyond the physical dimension. It will also be spiritual.

Verse 10 comes into sharp focus: *“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a spirit of grace and mercy, so that when they look on me, on Him whom they have pierced; they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over Him, as one weeps over a firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10).*

Zechariah prophesies that, at the End of Days, God will pour out His Spirit on the people of Israel and that as a result, they will look to Him and understand that they have pierced Him. This will lead to national mourning, similar to the grief of a family whose firstborn has died. What will cause their surprise? It will be the sudden realization that this man the Gentiles call Jesus (or Yeshua as He is called in the land of His birth), this man who was wrongfully blamed for all the Jew's troubles - the pogroms, the Inquisitions and the Crusades - is actually the Messiah.

AND WHY WILL THERE BE SUCH GRIEF ACROSS THE NATION?

Because the understanding will finally sink in that Jews have been piercing their Messiah for thousands of years, rejecting Him and calling Him names: “May His name and memory be obliterated.” The notion that Jewish people will acknowledge Him whom they have pierced is a hint to us that until that point, the people of Israel by and large will not acknowledge Him - Him whom they have pierced - both by nailing Him to the cross and by piercing his side with a spear as he was on it. If that man is indeed the Jewish Messiah, it means that before then, the children of Israel did not acknowledge Him and that He had to suffer, be pierced and die. And

if that man is indeed the Messiah, it means that the people of Israel (as a whole) did not recognize Him until that moment. Once all the people acknowledge both Him and their own departure from God's truth, they will repent and glorify Him with bitter tears and great sorrow, just as they would after the death of a firstborn son.

IT WOULD BE A GREAT SIN
TO MISIDENTIFY THIS PIERCED MAN:
“When they look on Me, on Him whom they have pierced.”

God is the speaker. God is the one who will pour out His Spirit. God is the one on whom the people of Israel look, and God is the one whom the people of Israel have pierced! Just as rejecting the prophets sent by God was equivalent to rejecting God Himself, piercing the Messiah is piercing God Himself. God revealed Himself to us in the form of the Messiah whom we have pierced and rejected, as a nation. However when He died, He became the sacrifice of atonement for our sins. The New Testament mentions that, along with Jesus, two other criminals were crucified with Him on the Eve of Passover in Jerusalem. The religious leaders asked to break the legs of the crucified men in order to hasten their deaths, as they did not want their bodies to be up on the crosses during the Sabbath. When the soldiers reached Jesus, they saw that He was already dead. The Gospel of John states:

“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water” (John 19:34).

It's interesting that John chose to mention that both blood and water came out of Jesus. The ancient reader might have found it peculiar that John would even bother mentioning that, but today it's common knowledge that when people die, physiologically speaking, they undergo Pericardial Effusion; The blood is separated into a clear liquid and red blood cells. And that is exactly what John saw. It proves that this person had indeed died. Of course, John had no way of knowing this, as the scientific knowledge didn't exist at the time. By the way, Zechariah's prophecy is quoted later on in the New Testament, in the Book of Revelation. The first chapter quotes Zechariah in that same exact context: The return of Jesus the Messiah and

the acknowledgment of the people of Israel toward the Messiah they have pierced and rejected:

“Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him” (Revelation 1:7).

As you could probably guess, Rabbinic Yeshivahs don't exactly teach about Zechariah or his prophecies. Attempts have been made to interpret it in various ways, but the problem for contemporary rabbis is that the Sages of Early Judaism always interpreted Zechariah 12 the same way as today's Messianic Jews: As a prophecy about the Messiah who is to be pierced to death!

One of the ancient interpretations in the Talmud explains that the prophecy in Zechariah 12 means that the Messiah, son of Joseph, must die. He is, according to ancient Jewish tradition, the tormented and suffering Messiah. If so, why is it such a surprise when the New Testament attributes this verse to Jesus? ... the Messiah who suffered and died upon the cross for their sins.

The Babylonian Talmud says: “One holds that it was for the Messiah the son of Joseph who was killed, as written in Zechariah 12: When they look on me, whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child” (Tractate Sukkah, Chapter 5).

Just as Joseph... As many know, the term “Messiah the son of Joseph” comes from Joseph's character in the Torah. A) Joseph was rejected by his own people, B) exiled to the Gentiles, C) believed to be dead and D) forgotten entirely. Meanwhile, E) among the Gentiles, Joseph was welcomed and became a great and important leader. F) He performed miracles and wonders in their midst and eventually, G) Joseph appeared before his brothers again. And this time – they didn't reject him, but accepted him and H) mourned for him with bitter tears.

...So too Messiah: Like Joseph, A) Jesus the Messiah was rejected by his own people, B) exiled to Gentiles, C) believed to be dead... D)

forgotten entirely. Meanwhile E) among the Gentiles, Jesus was welcomed and became a great and important leader. F) He continued to perform miracles and wonders in their midst and, as the prophets said – one day, like Joseph, G) Jesus too will once again be welcomed by his people, H) who will mourn deeply for Him.

Even **Rashi**, in his commentary on tractate **Sukkah 52**, interprets Zechariah's prophecy and admits: "And the Land mourned in the prophecy of Zechariah and prophesied for the future that they would mourn the Messiah the son of Joseph who was killed..." (Tractate Sukkah, Chapter 52).

Rabbi Moshe Alshich comments on this passage: "When they look on me, that they will look to me in complete repentance, seeing that the one they have pierced is the Messiah son of Joseph, who will take all of Israel's faults upon Himself" (Rabbi Moshe Alshich).

By the way, **Rabbi Alshich also says that the Messiah willingly accepts His torment:** "For He Himself wishes to bear it... And we thought that He would not have taken it upon Himself, only stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But when the time comes when He is revealed in all his glory, then all shall see and understand how great is the power of He who suffers torment for the generation" (Rabbi Moshe Alshich).

He based this on Isaiah 53 – yet another chapter about the Messiah who will suffer, be rejected and die. The prophecy in Isaiah 53 teaches that the Messiah will die, and Zechariah's prophecy teaches us how the Messiah will die: By piercing.

THE PIERCED-MESSIAH-PARALLELS IN ZECHARIAH, PSALMS AND ISAIAH:

Zechariah's prophecy about the pierced Messiah corresponds not only with Isaiah's in chapter 53, but also with King David's prophecy in Psalm 22. No one can hide it from you unless you let them.

✓

Chapter 4

Isaiah 53

The Prophecy About the Rejection of the Messiah

“... just take that prophecy out of the Haftarah readings...”

The 17th century Jewish historian, Raphael Levi, admitted that long ago the rabbis used to read Isaiah 53 in synagogues but after the chapter caused “arguments and great confusion” the rabbis decided that the simplest thing would be to just take that prophecy out of the Haftarah readings in synagogues. That’s why today when Isaiah 52 is read the reader stops in the middle of the chapter and the week after skips straight to Isaiah 54.

What happened to Isaiah chapter 53? In the Bible, Isaiah the prophet foretells that the Messiah would be rejected by his people, suffer and die in agony and that God would see his suffering and death as an atonement for the sins of humanity. Isaiah lived and prophesied around 700 BC. According to his prophecy in chapter 53, at the end of days, the leaders of Israel will recognize they made a mistake when they rejected the Messiah, so Isaiah put the prophecy in past tense. He also used the third person plural (we) because he saw himself as part of the people of Israel.

At the end of chapter 52 Isaiah writes an introduction to chapter 53: *“Behold, my servant shall prosper...”* Throughout the book of Isaiah, the term “servant” can refer to either Israel as a nation, to the prophet Isaiah, or to the Messiah, depending on the context. Here in this context, it clearly connects back to earlier sections in the book that speak of “the Servant of the Lord” as the Messiah (for example, in chapters 42, 49 and 50, where the Messiah is described as a servant who suffers).

“He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.”

God's servant will be high and lifted up - very high, it says. This wording refers back to the picture of God Himself in Isaiah 6:1-3, where Isaiah sees God sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the Temple. This is to emphasize the eminence of the Messiah who would in fact rise from the dead, ascend to the heavens and sit next to the Father. His actions would give him a higher status than every human king or ruler.

"Just as many were appalled at You—His appearance was disfigured more than any man, His form more than the sons of men."

Before the Messiah is exalted he would suffer and be humiliated. His body would be abused and tortured so badly that he would become completely disfigured and unrecognizable. But despite horrific suffering, the day would come when even kings would come to look to him with reverence.

"So He will sprinkle many nations. Kings will shut their mouths because of Him, for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will perceive."

And now, the heart of chapter 53 ... "Who has believed our report?"

This describes the lack of faith among the people of Israel who don't believe what they've heard.

"To whom is the arm of Adonai revealed?"

Isaiah calls the Messiah the "Arm of the Lord". Earlier, in chapter 40 Isaiah declares that the "Arm of the Lord" would rule for him. In chapter 51 the Gentiles put their hope in the "Arm of the Lord", and the "Arm of the Lord" would redeem. In chapter 52 the "Arm of the Lord" brings salvation. Now, in 53, Isaiah reveals that the "Arm of the Lord" is in fact the Messiah. The Messiah is very much part of God himself.

For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him, nor beauty that we should desire Him.

He grew up like a shoot in spiritually dry ground – because there had been no word from God for 400 years.

He had no beauty that we should desire Him.

He did not appeal to his chosen people. They didn't want him. His appearance wasn't particularly glorious or impressive, and the way he showed up didn't cause people to desire him. In contrast to what rabbinic Halacha teaches today, according to this prophecy, the Messiah would not be born to a prestigious rabbinic family or grow up in the grand residences of wealthy rabbis. It can be said with near certainty that the external appearance of the Messiah was nothing extraordinary at all.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, One from whom people hide their faces.

The life of the Messiah was characterized by pain, rejection and suffering. He didn't get the honor due to the Messiah, but was despised and rejected by the leaders of his people. They considered him some kind of social misfit – someone people might hide their faces from as when they pass someone on the street whom they are embarrassed to see.

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

“We” did not esteem Him. Isaiah is speaking in first person plural - he identifies himself together with the people of Israel. The people of Israel as a whole did not esteem God's Servant. God's Servant here cannot therefore be Isaiah, nor the people of Israel. It has to be the Messiah. The Servant of the Lord's own people didn't think he was the Messiah. His chosen people didn't even realize it could be him.

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our pains. Yet we esteemed Him stricken, struck by God, and afflicted.

The Messiah suffered on behalf of his people – he carried their sicknesses, their suffering, their pain... and the sins they committed, while the children of Israel thought he was being punished, and that his suffering was God's punishment for sins that he himself had committed. We didn't understand that it was for OUR sin.

But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities. The chastisement for our shalom was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

The original Hebrew text says “wounded, pierced.” He died. Like someone who has fallen wounded, or someone perforated with bullets – not for any fault of his own, but it was our wrongdoing. He was crushed because of our iniquities, our sins – the punishment and discipline we deserved went to him. The “stripes” are hard blows that leave marks, and by his scars we are healed. In exactly this way, hundreds of years later, the prophecy was fulfilled. Jesus was brutally whipped and went to the cross in order to suffer the death we deserved.

We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us turned to his own way. So Adonai has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

The Hebrew Scriptures talk of us going astray, like how sheep wander off and get lost. We all ignored him and went on our way. But despite this, God put all our sin and iniquity on him – on the Messiah.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter, like a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.

The Hebrew says he was exploited, abused... his dignity and right to a fair trial were taken from him. The Hebrew says he was afflicted – tortured – but he didn't open his mouth. This shows that he did not resist his unjust sentence. He didn't try to rebel or escape, and he didn't take legal representation in spite of the fact he was facing a death sentence, but he was

led like a sheep to the slaughter, without resisting the injustices being done to him.

Because of oppression and judgment He was taken away. As for His generation, who considered? For He was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of my people—the stroke was theirs.

They arrested him and took him off for trial. As a result of the trial he was “cut off from the land of the living”.... a death sentence. Not for his own crimes, but those of his people. In the Scriptures, “My people” always means the people of Israel. The Messiah would die not for his own sin but for the sin of his people – the people who should be taking the punishment for their own sins – but the Messiah took it upon himself. He is the one who died. His people didn’t even want to bring him up in conversation, but would rather sweep his existence under the carpet. So for the past 2000 years, Yeshua the Messiah has been the best kept secret in Judaism, and this is precisely why he was labeled “Yeshu” in Judaism, which stands for “May his name and memory be blotted out”.

His grave was given with the wicked, and by a rich man in His death, though He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

Even though he was taken out to be executed like a criminal, even though he did nothing wrong and never lied, in his death he was destined to be buried in the fancy tomb of a rich man. Jesus was indeed killed on the cross and was buried in the grave of a rich man by the name of Joseph of Arimathea - a member of the Sanhedrin. It's a clear illustration of the ironic situation in which the Messiah receives honor for the noblest deed of them all – taking the death sentence we deserve on Himself.

Yet it pleased Adonai to bruise Him. He caused Him to suffer. If He makes His soul a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the will of Adonai will succeed by His hand.

So who is responsible for the death of the Messiah? “The Jews”? As so many Catholics have accused in the past? Maybe the Romans? They were the ones who actually crucified him? No.

“God was pleased to bruise him”. God is the only one able to forgive and bring salvation to the world and he turned himself into a sacrifice. What kind of sacrifice? A guilt offering. The death of the Messiah was no accident – God used his own stiff-necked people as priests in order to bring about the forgiveness of sins not only for his people Israel, but for the whole of humanity. In contrast to the Yom Kippur sacrifice which was only valid until the following year and just ‘covered over’ sin, the atonement of the Messiah took away sin once and for all! Not one human being is perfect – none are able to be that perfect sacrifice. Only God himself could do that. After that comes a very interesting statement:

“He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days,”

Despite being killed, he would also prolong his days. He would rise again from the dead and would see the “fruit of his seed”, planted in his resurrection.

As a result of the anguish of His soul He will see it and be satisfied by His knowledge. The Righteous One, My Servant will make many righteous and He will bear their iniquities.

The Messiah would see it and be satisfied by his labor because many would be made righteous by the suffering he endured as a righteous man when he took on himself the sins and iniquities of many. All who recognize him as the Messiah will be his “seed” in a spiritual sense.

Therefore I will give Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the spoil with the mighty— because He poured out His soul to death, and was counted with transgressors.

For He bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.

The Messiah was the one interceding as an advocate for sinners before a holy God. The Messiah took on his shoulders the sin of all who believe in him. It’s an encouraging prophecy of hope and a future. God is not just interested in forgiveness expressed in words but also demonstrated in

actions. That's why he took on the appearance of a servant and took the punishment that we deserve on himself.

An objection to this comes from Rabbi Haim Rettig, who writes, “Is it possible that any Christian anywhere in the world could fit the description of the Servant of the Lord that is led like a sheep to the slaughter? It cannot be that Isaiah the prophet could prophesy about a Christian event rather than a Jewish one. The prophecy of Isaiah is talking about the people of Israel throughout the generations, that Israel has given itself to be the innocent lamb”.

What irony! Despite the fact that rabbis twisted Yeshua's name into “Yeshu the Christian”, changing his name didn't turn him into a Christian. The official religion of Christianity was only established in the third century. Yeshua was in fact Jewish, from the line of David, who lived in Israel like his ancestor David. Also, when Rabbi Rettig claims that the prophecy of Isaiah 53 is not about the Messiah but about Israel, that gave itself up as an innocent lamb, can it be said in actual fact that the people of Israel could be described as “an innocent lamb”? The writings of Isaiah will sufficiently answer Rabbi Rettig's objection farther along in this chapter. And has Israel taken away the sin of the world? No.

Now a few more reasons that prove it impossible for Isaiah 53 to be about Israel: The Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53 is consistently presented as an individual and not as a plurality or collective noun, like a people group. Verse 8 says, “For the transgressions of My people He was stricken”. What people was Isaiah part of? The people of Israel, of course. So “my people” refers to the people of Israel. Therefore Israel cannot be the Suffering Servant of the Lord. If the people of Israel was the Servant of the Lord here, who would be “my people”?

Moreover, the Servant of the Lord suffers willingly, submissively and without objection. The people of Israel have never suffered willingly! According to the Torah, the suffering of Israel was a result of sin not because of their righteousness whereas the Servant of the Lord suffered as a righteous person not because he had sinned. The Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53 was guiltless but according to the Torah the people of Israel were

always punished and had suffered because of their sin and furthermore the Gentiles didn't get healing from God as a result of Jewish people being persecuted as some would suggest.

The Servant of the Lord died in our place as a sacrifice for our sin. The people of Israel, on the other hand, couldn't have legitimately suffered for the Gentiles owing to their wickedness.

Although the people of Israel were decimated in the Holocaust, they were never completely "cut off". The Servant of the Lord actually died and came back from the grave - the grave of a rich person. If the Servant of the Lord is Israel and not the Messiah, the biblical concept of "Messiah ben Yosef" is suddenly torn from the book as if it never existed.

In summary, we did wrong, the Messiah was punished. We sinned, and he suffered. We deserve death, and he was crucified in our place. A perfect God took on the likeness of a Servant in order to reveal himself to us as one of us. He allowed us to humiliate him, reject him, and torture him to death so he could take our sins upon himself. So it seems appropriate for us to suffer for the good of others - even those who sin against us. If God who is perfect can forgive us, imperfect as we are, how much more should we forgive one another? This is the wonderful message of the Suffering Servant: The God who loves us has done for us what we could never do for ourselves!

IS ISAIAH 53 ABOUT THE PEOPLE
OF ISRAEL OR MESSIAH OF ISRAEL?
*"Midrash Tanhuma it speaks of no one
but the Messiah, the Son of David."*

About 1,000 years ago, attempts were made to reinterpret the whole chapter, claiming that it does not speak about the Messiah. Some must be wondering what "reinterpret" means? Up until 1,000 years ago, all the wise men of Israel – the Sages – understood that Isaiah 53 was about the Messiah. The claim of present day rabbis that the chapter speaks about the people of Israel and not about the Messiah is relatively new.

What did Rabbi Haim Rettig say when he answered a question on the moreshet.co.il website? The question asked if Isaiah 53 points to Jesus. The rabbi's complete answer is available on the website, but pay attention to the following pearls that were passed before the people's eyes:

“Your question raised a smile on my lips, after all, how can it be possible that any Christian in the world would fit the description of “The Servant of the LORD” who is brought like a lamb to the slaughter?! It is not possible that Isaiah would prophesy regarding a Christian event rather than a Jewish one. Isaiah’s prophecies spoke about the people of Israel. Throughout the generations, the Jewish people offered themselves as an innocent lamb.”

The rabbi claims that it's impossible for Jesus to be the Messiah, since it's impossible that the prophecy could be about a Christian event or about any Christian in the world. As if Jesus, the Son of David from the tribe of Judah, could be described as a “Christian”. Not only have the rabbis distorted the name of Yeshua the Messiah to “Jesus the Christian”, but this rabbi also persists in the claims that the “innocent lamb” of Isaiah 53 is not the Messiah but the people of Israel.

But what if you discovered that it is only modern rabbis, only after the time of Jesus, who suddenly began to interpret the prophecy in Isaiah 53 as if it was about the people of Israel? And what if it was revealed to you that, in contrast, the ancient sages themselves interpreted Isaiah 53 as a prophecy about the Messiah?

SAGES SEEING MESSIAH.

The Jewish Sages thought Isaiah 53 was about the Messiah. It's important to understand we're not just talking about a Christian interpretation here – the Jewish Sages of ancient times also interpreted Isaiah 53 to be about the Messiah. In fact, the well-known term “Messiah ben Yosef” is actually from this very text.

The ancient Jewish translation of Yonatan ben Uzziel (Targum Jonathan) from the first century opened the section with the words “The Anointed Servant” that is to say Ben Uzziel connected the chapter to the Messiah, which means the Anointed One.

Rabbi Yitzhak Abravanel who lived centuries ago admitted with regards to “Yonatan ben Uzziel’s interpretation that it was about the coming Messiah [as] was also the opinion of the Sages (of blessed memory) as can be seen in much of their commentary.”

The Book of the Zohar recognizes the principle of substitution that the suffering of the Messiah would come to take the suffering that others deserved for their sins. On the verse “Surely He has borne our griefs”, the Book of the Zohar says, “There is in the Garden of Eden a palace named the Palace of the Sons of Sickness. This palace the Messiah enters, and He summons every pain and every chastisement of Israel: All of these come and rest upon Him. And were it not that he had thus lightened them off Israel and taken them upon himself, there had been no man able to bear Israel’s chastisements for the transgression of the law.”

Midrash Konen in discussing Isaiah 53 puts the following words in the mouth of Elijah the prophet: “Thus says the Messiah: Endure the sufferings and the sentence your Master who makes you suffer because of the sin of Yisroel. Thus it is written, “He was wounded because of our transgressions, he was crushed because of our iniquities”, until the time the end comes.”

Tractate Sanhedrin in the Babylonian Talmud (98b), writes about the name of the Messiah: “His name is ‘the leper scholar,’ as it is written, “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God, and afflicted”.

In Midrash Tanhuma: “**Rabbi Nachman says**, it speaks of no one but the Messiah, the Son of David of whom it is said, here a man called “the plant”, and Jonathan translated it to mean the Messiah and it is rightly said, “man of sorrows, acquainted with grief”.

Midrash Shmuel says this about Isaiah 53: “The suffering was divided into three parts: One for the generation of the Patriarchs, one for the generation of Shmad, and one for the King Messiah”.

The prayers for Yom Kippur, also relate Isaiah 53 to the Messiah.

Here is the prayer **added for Yom Kippur by Rabbi Eliezer** around the time of the seventh century: “Our righteous Messiah has turned away from us we have acted foolishly and there is no one to justify us. Our iniquities and the yoke of our transgressions he bears and he is pierced for our transgressions. He carries our sins on his shoulder, to find forgiveness for our iniquities. By his wounds we are healed.”

The deeper we go into this prayer for Yom Kippur the more significant it gets. The prayer brings the sense that the Messiah left his people. “The righteous Messiah turned [away]”. That is to say, the Messiah has already come and left. Also, the Messiah suffered in the place of the people and the sins of people were put on him - then after the Messiah suffered, he left them and that was the reason for their concern so the people are praying for his return. A large part of this prayer is taken straight out of Isaiah 53, so from this it can be proven that up to the 7th century the Jewish perception – that prevailed also among the rabbis – was that Isaiah 53 was about the Messiah.

In Genesis Rabbah, Rabbi Moshe haDarshan says that God enabled the Messiah to save souls but together with that, he would suffer greatly. Also **Maimonides** relates Isaiah 53 to the Messiah in his Epistle to Yemen. **Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai** wrote, “And Messiah of Ephraim died there and Israel mourns for him as it is written: ‘He is despised and rejected of men’, and he goes back into hiding, for it says: ‘and we hid, as it were, our faces from him’.”

Altogether, Tractate Sotah 14, Midrash Rabbah Parasha 5, Midrash Tanhuma, Midrash Konen, Yalkut Shimoni and actually **the whole Talmud** always related this chapter to the Messiah, as did all the rabbis until about a thousand years ago. All agreed that Isaiah 53 prophesies about the Messiah.

THE TURNING POINT IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Rashi's revision in the Middle Ages: Rashi lived, as many know, in Spain, at a time when Jews and Christians lived together and so naturally, arguments arose between them. Christian friends and neighbors of Rashi tried to convince him that Biblical prophecy pointed to Jesus. Among other prophecies, they of course showed him Isaiah 53. Because the prophecy in Isaiah 53 is so sharp and clear, Rashi had no choice. He obviously didn't want to admit that Jesus was the Messiah, so he had to try to reinterpret the prophecy so that it was no longer about the Messiah but instead about the people of Israel. Rashi's claim was that the suffering servant is a metaphor about the people of Israel who suffered at the hands of the Gentiles. Many different rabbis – even Rabbi Saadia Gaon, who confronted Christians in debates, did not attribute Isaiah 53 to the people of Israel as a nation, but to a single person. Rabbi Naphtali ben Asher, and Rabbi Moshe Alshich adamantly opposed Rashi's new interpretation, and demanded that the Sages of Israel should ignore him and return to the original interpretation, the most famous of among them was Maimonides, who categorically declared that Rashi was completely mistaken.

Maimonides (1135-1204), one of the most famous rabbis of all time, in a letter to Jacob Alfajumi, stated: "What is to be the manner of Messiah's advent, and where will be the place of His first appearance? . . . And Isaiah speaks similarly of the time when he will appear...He came up as a sucker before him, and as a root out of dry earth, . . . in the words of Isaiah, when describing the manner in which the kings will hearken to him, at him the kings will shut their mouth; for that which had not been told them they have seen, and that which they had not heard they have perceived." In this quote, Maimonides applied Isaiah 52:15 and Isaiah 53:2 to the Messiah (*The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters*, Translation: Driver & Neubauer, KTAV 1969, pp. 374-375).

But today, it is Rashi's interpretation that is accepted among the rabbis who have joined the ranks of those who cannot admit that Yeshua could

have been the Messiah who was rejected, suffered and died exactly as Isaiah prophesied.

Therefore, it's undeniable that the source of the Jewish religion, classical Jewish thought, almost unanimously attributes Isaiah 53 to a single person and not to the people of Israel as a whole. That single person is obviously the Messiah. And let's revisit Rabbi Rettig's claim that the people of Israel are an "innocent lamb"? Do the people of Israel qualify as the innocent lamb?

"Innocent lamb" is a biblical definition for someone who is without sin or blemish – someone who is never wrong, never does evil, and never sins... someone who is perfect, pure, and sinless. Do the people of Israel truly fit this definition? It's enough to open the newspapers or listen to the news to find the answer, but since our discussion started with the prophet Isaiah, let's allow him to answer this question as well. Pay close attention how he speaks to the people of Israel: *"For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly... Their feet run to evil, they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace"* (Is 59:3-8).

As far as Isaiah's concerned, Israel was no "innocent lamb"! A bitter pill to swallow: it's impossible to declare the people of Israel, an "innocent lamb". The prophecy of Isaiah 53 has caught Rabbinic Judaism "with their pants down" over and over again. Therefore, it's not surprising to read the words of Rafael Levi, the 17th century Jewish researcher, who discovered that in the past Isaiah 53 used to be read in the synagogues; but since the chapter caused so much confusion and so many arguments, the rabbis decided that the simplest solution would be to remove the prophecy from the Haftarah readings. This effectively took away the key to knowledge from the people of Israel. It was done in order to hide Jesus from his people. Those who love the truth will read the prophecy of Isaiah 53 for themselves.

IS THE PLURAL FORM OF ISAIAH 53 TALKING ABOUT ISRAEL?

We need to focus in on this subject in particular detail, because so many children of Israel still believe today that Isaiah 53 isn't talking about the Messiah, but about the nation of Israel, suffering at the hands of the world. Some rabbis will even claim that this was always Judaism's view. However all ancient Jewish writings, the Mishna and Gamara (Talmud) and the Midrashim, as well as other manuscripts, saw Isaiah 53 as a passage talking about the Messiah, not the nation of Israel. So which is it? Let the Hebrew scholars go head to head with Hebrew scholars as the controversy continues below.

Jewish sages preceding the medieval scholar, Rashi, all believed this passage to be a description of the Messiah, so when Rashi controversially first suggested that Isaiah 53 was about Israel some time around 1050 CE, the Jewish community did not receive his new interpretation positively. As we have said, even Maimonides opposed it.

JEWISH SAGES SAW ISAIAH 53 AS SPEAKING OF AN INDIVIDUAL, NOT PLURAL:

It bears repeating that **Targum Jonathan** interprets Isaiah 53 with reference to the Messiah (singular) and the **Talmud** never interprets Isaiah 53 with reference to the nation of Israel (as a whole), but only to individuals within it.

The Jerusalem Talmud (Tractate Shekalim 5:1) applies 53:12 to Rabbi Akiva (singular), while the Babylonian Talmud applies 53:4 to the Messiah (singular) in Sanhedrin 98b, 53:10 to the righteous in general in Tractate Berakhot 5a, and 53:12 to Moses (singular) in Tractate Sotah 14a.

Midrash Rabbah interprets 53:5 with reference to the Messiah (**Ruth Rabbah 2:14**).

Yalkut Shimoni applies 52:13 to the Messiah.

However, once Christian missionaries started using Isaiah chapter 53 widely as a strategy to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, the number of rabbis accepting Rashi's interpretation as an easy solution grew dramatically up to the point where today, the idea that it pertains to Israel is the most accepted interpretation of Isaiah 53.

Rabbi Daniel Asor, in his book, "Singular and plural uses in Isaiah chapter 53, and Christianity's Linguistic Failure in its Interpretation" admits that, "There are 67 expressions in chapter 53 that speaks of the singular", but still assures his readers that Isaiah is merely "speaking poetically about the nation of Israel as of the singular". He bases his argument on verses 8 and 9, where Isaiah is using plural instead of singular. Let's look at these two instances more closely.

"Lamo" (למו) in Isaiah 53 verse 8: Rabbi Daniel Asor claims that according to verse 8, the character is described in the plural, not in singular, and therefore cannot be talking about the Messiah. He writes (from Hebrew): "The word 'Lamo' means 'them', and instead of the prophet writing 'for the transgression of my people 'he' was punished', he writes 'Lamo', meaning the servant is plural... that is why it is not possible for Jesus to be the Messiah." However, there are a few other possible forms that Asor fails to acknowledge. "Lamo" can be either plural or singular, as Isaiah elsewhere uses lamo to mean "to it," not "to them," Isaiah 44:15, "he makes an idol and bows down to it". So, if we take lamo to refer to the servant, it could still mean "for him" as opposed to "for them."

Septuagint (LXX): εἰς θάνατον (למוֹת) – The translators of the Septuagint saw a taf at the end of "lamo," making it "lamavet" – to death. "He was led to death".

NJPSV (New Jewish Publication Society Version) understood "nega' lamo" as "For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due". The servant receives a stroke for those for whom he is suffering.

So then, grammatically the Messiah can fit perfectly with verse 8 in Isaiah chapter 53.

“Bemotayv” (בְּמֹתָיו) in Isaiah 53 verse 9.

The second time rabbi Asor “noticed” a plural description is in verse 9, where he believes the character is dying multiple deaths, not a single one, and therefore, cannot be the Messiah. He writes (from Hebrew): “Any Hebrew speaker will be amazed. Why does it says “Bemotayv” and not “Bemoto”? How come the word “Moto” in singular does not appear here, yet the word in plural, “Bemotayv”, does? Meaning the servant in Isaiah 53 experienced several deaths, not just one. Didn’t Jesus died only one famous death?...It is clear that the term “Bemotayv” in the Bible speaks of plural not singular”.

However, both in biblical Hebrew and in modern Hebrew, a word written in plural form doesn’t necessarily mean more than one referent, but may also indicate collectively (intensive plural). For example: פְנִי (Panayv) רְחָמִים (Rahamim) אֲדֹנִי (Adonayv) are all in plural form, yet have a singular meaning to them. Only two references in the Hebrew Scriptures refer to “death” in the plural: (1) Isaiah 53:9. (2) Ezekiel 28:10 (מֹתִי עָרְלִים תָמֹת). Ezekiel 28:10 clearly states that Ezekiel is using plural deaths (מֹתִי) in order to describe a singular death (תָמֹת).

NOW FOR A LOOK AT HOW BIBLE TRANSLATORS IN MODERN AND ANCIENT TIMES UNDERSTOOD THIS VERSE:

As discovered within the **Dead Sea Scrolls**, before Jesus was born, the verse in question was written in the singular: “בְּמוֹתוֹ” .

Translating **the Septuagint**, the Jewish sages also understood this verse was talking about the singular, translating it: ἀντὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ = בְּמוֹתוֹ (death in the singular).

The NJPSV (New Jewish Publication Society Version) translated: “And with the rich his tomb”. As a modern Jewish version, although they took out “death”, they still choose to render verse 9 as in the singular, not plural.

The Targum (Jonathan ben Uzziel) a Jewish translation into Aramaic translated “Bemotayv” into the singular (בְּמוֹתָא) and not into the plural (בְּמוֹתִיא). If prophet Isaiah meant the word for death to be in the plural, he probably would have used “בְּמוֹתִים” such as appears in 2nd Samuel 1:23 (see also Ezekiel 28:10).

With all due respect, would Asor accuse the Prophet Ezekiel as well as the interpretations by Jewish sages of ancient times as being “failures”? Or perhaps Asor would like to blame The Jewish Publication Society of trying to force their Jewish translation to fit Jesus? While some accuse adherents of the New Testament of twisting the Old Testament, a more careful investigation shows that this is not the case at all. Indeed as the old adage says, “The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed.”

Isaiah chapter 53 continues to shout the name of Jesus-Yeshua through the sufferings and death of the Messiah for the sins of mankind as a testimony of God’s love!



Chapter 5

Virgin Birth: Fairy Tale or Biblical Prophecy?

The word ‘alma’ appears in the Old Testament seven times, and the meaning is always a young, unmarried girl.

The New Testament declares that, **according to the Old Testament prophecy, Jesus was born in a supernatural manner – his mother was a virgin.** This is based on Isaiah 7:14 where it says,

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.’”

Rabbi Josef Mizrachi tried to challenge the New Testament’s claim, saying: “Never in history did anyone interpret the word ‘alma’ as virgin.” The truth is that many Jewish scholars, including Rashi, interpreted the word alma as virgin several times, as will be explained. But the Rabbis say that the concept of the “Virgin Birth” is pure paganism. Do they believe that God is powerless to cause a virgin woman to conceive a child by means other than intercourse?

The word often translated as ‘virgin’ (betulah) in the Bible can actually refer to a married woman as well as to an unmarried woman but the word ‘alma’ refers to a young and specifically unmarried woman. According to the culture and to God’s commandments during biblical times, a young girl who never married would be presumed to be chaste. Therefore, the use of the word alma rather than betulah in this verse and prophecy regarding the birth of the Messiah, actually confirms the fact that the Messiah was supposed to arrive through a miraculous birth.

An essential doctrine such as the virgin birth cannot be grounded in a single verse, so it’s important to understand what is happening in the

context of this important chapter.

The context of the prophecy: Isaiah 7 begins with a description of King Ahaz, son of Jotham son of Uzziah, king of Judah. Unlike his father, Ahaz didn't walk by faith in the ways of the LORD, but was a wicked ruler and idol worshiper. He worshiped Baal and even offered his own sons as a sacrifice to his gods. His neighbors were no better than him... In Aram, King Ratzin reigned and in Samaria, Pekah son of Remaliah was the king of Israel. These two kings wanted to join with Ahaz and his Kingdom of Judah to form a defense treaty against the king of Assyria, who at that time, had begun a campaign of conquest. But Ahaz refused to join them, so in response, the king of Aram and the king of Israel threatened to go to war against Judah. Their intention was to pull down Ahaz and put a "puppet" king in his place. Since Ahaz didn't trust in God, he knew that he had no chance of winning on his own and turned to the king of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser III, to beg for help. Along with the request, he also sent money and gold. Ahaz, a king from the house of David, was supposed to ask for help from the God of his fathers but as in so many other cases like his, this story shows us that whoever puts his trust in people instead of God is destined for disappointment. The armies of Aram and Israel came up against Judah and besieged Jerusalem, but conquering the city was a challenge due to the fortifications which were built there back in the days of Uziyahu, Ahaz's grandfather. Because Ahaz failed to consult God, God sent the prophet Isaiah (along with his son Shear-Jashub) to Ahaz, to bring him words of encouragement.

The purpose of the prophecy was to remind Ahaz and his people that the lives of all people are in God's hands and that everyone should believe and trust in Him. Isaiah came to Ahaz while he was observing the besieging enemies, and said: "*These two smoldering stumps of firebrands.*" The prophet describes Ratzin, king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, as powerless. In God's eyes, they are no more than a burning end of a tail, letting off smoke. Isaiah prophesies in verses 7-9 that the plan of the two kings where they plan to kill Ahaz and set up a "puppet" king in his place would fail. Ahaz, king of Judah, is seeing right in front of him the armies of Aram and Israel who are planning to destroy him. Yet in the face

of all this, the prophet Isaiah promises Ahaz that they will fall. The prophecy was fulfilled 65 years later.

The king must have thought: “How will this help me 65 years from now? I need a solution now!” In verses 10-11 God knew the king’s thoughts, and made a proposal in order to encourage him:

“*Ask a sign of the LORD your God*” (Isaiah 7:10). In verse 12, King Ahaz, who did not esteem God but worshiped idols, answered God sarcastically: “*Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test’*” (Isaiah 7:12).

God was willing to give king Ahaz a sign in order to inspire him to instill faith in him, but the insincere and hypocritical response of Ahaz proved the depth of his wickedness and contempt for God. He knew very well that if he asked for a sign that would come to pass, he would need to repent and change his ways. He wanted to keep the power and control in his hands. This response angered God. Now, the prophet Isaiah turns from Ahaz to the people, to the entire house of David and says to them: “***Therefore the Lord himself will give YOU [you all – pl.] a sign.***” (Isaiah 7:14 [emphasis mine]) Ahaz refused to ask for a sign so God by his own initiative, will give the people a sign.

WHEN WOULD IT HAPPEN?

In the next verses we learn that this will be a difficult period for the people of Israel. The prophet indicates that “*he will eat curds and honey.*” Sounds good? Not in biblical times – curd is a by-product of milk and as for honey in those days, people needed to go into the woods on a difficult search for beehives. This means that it would be during a time of hardship and deprivation. And indeed, Jesus was born in a time when the people of Israel were sighing under the Roman occupation. “*He knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good*” Isaiah continues to describe the promised son from the alma as Immanuel: He will be good and perfect, he will refuse evil and will choose only what is good. Now it is revealed why God asked Isaiah to bring his young son, Shear-jashub, with him. At this point, the

prophet Isaiah turns back to king Ahaz, points to Shear-jashub, and says: “*For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted.*” That means that before Isaiah’s son knew how to discern between good and evil, the two kings who were so feared by Ahaz and the people of Judah, would be removed from the earth. Sure enough, within two years, those two kings met their death. To understand Hebrew prophecy is to understand that it contains patterns and parallels that can repeat throughout history in partial fulfillments until all the signs are in place for the ultimate fulfillment. The example of Isaiah’s son was a partial fulfillment that pointed ahead to the ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD ‘ALMA’.

Now that more understanding has been unlocked on what is happening in chapter 7, let’s go back to the meaning of the word ‘alma’ in the Old Testament. In order to make a decision about the meaning of any word, it’s necessary to examine the context in which it appears, as demonstrated above, and then compare it to all the other places where it appears.

The word ‘alma’ appears in the Old Testament seven times, and the meaning is always a young, unmarried girl. In Genesis 24, Abraham’s servant, Eliezer, comes to Nahor and prays that God will help him find the right wife for Isaac. There Rebekah is described: “*a young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden (alma) whom no man had known.*” Later, Eliezer refers to her as “the alma”. In Exodus 2, we are told that Pharaoh’s daughter pulled Moses out of the water. Moses’ sister, Miriam, stood at a distance and watched the event. Then, she ran to Pharaoh’s daughter and offered to find a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby for her: “*And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go.” So the girl (alma) went and called the child’s mother.*” Miriam’s description in verse 4 testifies that she was a young girl, unmarried, as she still lived with her parents.

In Psalm 68:25, “virgins (alma pl.) playing tambourines” are single women, who took part in the procession accompanying the king to the holy

place.

Proverbs 30:19-20 “*the way of a man with a virgin (alma). This is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, ‘I have done no wrong.’*” The author says that a man who intentionally leads the way with a virgin in sexual relations is like an adulteress who intentionally leads men astray but doesn’t admit her sin.

In **Song of Songs 1**, Solomon’s bride praises him while she says that young women (alma pl.) who are looking for a husband, are attracted to him as a man who is about to marry her.

In **Song of Songs 6**, three categories are mentioned of women who lived in the king’s palace: Queens, concubines and young women (alma pl.) The young women (alma pl.) were there to serve the queens and were kept under purity laws, which lasted an entire year. They had to be virgins, and to marry eventually. Therefore, the Old Testament always uses ‘alma’ for an unmarried woman, who is also a virgin.

Another question that must be considered is how the word ‘alma’ was understood in ancient Judaism. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Old Testament made by 70 Jewish scholars long before the time of Jesus, and they translated the word ‘alma’ in Isaiah 7:14 to mean ‘virgin’. The Pshitta, a Syriac translation from Hebrew undertaken in the 2nd century CE, also translated ‘alma’ as ‘virgin’ as did the Vulgate translation into Latin.

The Jewish biblical scholar Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes that the rabbis quote Rashi as someone who interprets the word ‘alma’ as a ‘young woman,’ and concedes that so does Rashi consider the word in Isaiah 7:14 to refer to a young woman rather than a virgin. However, Fruchtenbaum points out that it’s easy to understand why Rashi would take a different position in this particular case: he was involved in polemical debates against Christians, and therefore he took an opposite position to the one which had been accepted up until his time in order to try and disprove Jesus’ messiahship. In fact, he took a different position to the one that he himself held in a different case – Rashi didn’t always interpret the word ‘alma’ as a ‘young woman’. This word also appears in the Song of Songs

and in these verses he interpreted ‘alma’ as a ‘virgin’. Moreover, Rashi himself indicated that other Jewish scholars producing Biblical commentary in his time also interpreted the word ‘alma’ in Isaiah 7:14 as a ‘virgin’.

And it is important to note that the ancient Jewish Sages also held the belief that the Messiah wouldn’t have a biological father. Here is what they taught –

"The redeemer whom I shall raise up from among you, will have no father"

(Genesis Rabbah of Rabbi Moshe haDarshan)



Chapter 6

What Does it Mean that God has a Son? Isn't that a Pagan Concept?

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end” (Luke 1:31-33).

Did God have intercourse, go into labor and deliver the son of God?

Of course not! In the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament), the angels, who partake in the heavenly and spiritual nature of God (in contrast to the fleshly and earthly nature of us human beings) are referred to as “sons of God”. At times, God refers to the people of Israel as “sons”. The kings of Israel also are called “sons of God”. Is it any wonder then, that the King Messiah – the most high and the ideal representative of God, when he arrived from within the people of Israel – is called the “Son of God”? The Messiah is not supposed to be an ordinary man like all other men, but God’s incarnation into humanity. Therefore, His birth should also be supernatural and extraordinary, as a sign from God.

The Hebrew Scriptures show that Messiah would be “the Son of God” The Qumran Scrolls, which were found at the Dead Sea, were written during the third century BC. Scroll 4Q246 describes the understanding within Judaism during the era of the Essenes that the Messiah was to be the “Son of God”. The Jewish Essenes based their expectations on descriptions found in the Hebrew Scriptures. They lived hundreds of years before the time of Jesus and the New Testament, so they cannot be accused of being “pagan Christians”. So, what led them to believe that the Messiah would be the Son of God?

In Proverbs 30, the following questions are presented:

*“Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?*

What is his name, and what is his son’s name? Surely you know!”

The chapter lays out Agur’s conclusions. Proverbs 30 is dedicated to rebuking the two boys, Ithiel and Ucal. He asks them five rhetorical questions, each of which has the same answer as the sixth and last question.

*“Who has ascended to heaven and come down?”
“Who has gathered the wind in his fists?”
“Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?”
“Who has established the universe and preserves the laws of nature?”
“What is his name?”*

The answer to these five rhetorical questions is of course, “God”. But then Agur reaches the climax: his sixth and last question, whose answer he previously defined as not requiring supernatural knowledge. Previously in verse 3, he said: *“I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One”* (Proverbs 30:3). Then what is this deeply mysterious and special question of Agur (in Proverbs 30:4)?

“What is his [God’s] son’s name? Surely you know!” According to Agur, it’s not that difficult to know the answers to the rhetorical questions, but can the reader give the answer to the last question? The answer to this riddle is hiding in the Holy Scriptures, and this answer leads us to the Son of God – the Messiah.

Jewish Sages agree that this “Son of God” is the Messiah. The way the Jewish sages understood this will require a good measure of attention. From the book “Minhat Eliyahu”, which quotes from “Yalkut Mishley”, explaining how the anticipated answer can be found: ““Who has ascended

to heaven and come down', is the Holy One, blessed be His name – for God rose up with a shout and came down on Mt. Sinai... And he answers, 'What is his son's name? Surely you know!' Meaning, so you will study and understand what his name is who is called Moses after the name of Metatron, the Minister of the Face."

According to the Jewish book, Zohar, and the literature of the Jewish sages, Metatron is the Minister of the World; a representative with absolute divine embodiment! Metatron holds the characteristics of God Himself, he is the highest entity in the heavenly hierarchy. The Jewish Zohar describes that, just like God Himself, Metatron also sits on God's Holy Throne while he is "wearing God's skin"; he is even called "The Little God". And on his head, the crown with words by which the universe was created.

The New Testament is consistent with the Jewish Scriptures.
Hundreds of years before the book of Zohar was written, John describes Jesus in his gospel:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

The book of Zohar describes Metatron's character and nature, as one who is dressed in God's image, as God's representative to His creation. Conveniently, the Jewish sages invented him as a substitute for Jesus, whom they rejected. If this is not clear yet, don't worry. The concept of Metatron will be explored again in more detail in chapter 11: "Why Messiah Must be God."

"SON OF GOD" IS
"ANCIENT OF DAYS"
IS MESSIAH.

The Hebrew Scriptures make use of the term "son" quite often, to describe those from the sons of Israel who obey and follow God. In the New Testament as well, the believers in Jesus are called "sons of God".

Therefore, God has many sons. But while the kings, the angels and the sons of Israel were adopted by God as sons, the Son of God was not adopted. He always existed. He is eternal. The Son of God is the way in which the Creator of the universe reveals Himself to His creation. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Prophet Daniel wrote that the Son of God will come in the clouds of heaven: that means, in a supernatural way. And he describes His eternal nature, as “Ancient of Days” (Daniel 7:9).

The Prophet Micah says “*whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days*” (Micah 5:2).

In Isaiah 9:6, God says: “*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom.*”

It is interesting that God is speaking of Himself in plural form, and speaks of a child. But not just any child: a unique child – a child who receives the names of God. “Wonderful Counselor” means that he has supernatural knowledge. “Mighty God”, indicates that He will take part in the very nature of Almighty God Himself. “Everlasting Father” speaks not only of His eternal nature, but equates Him with God the eternal Father. “Prince of Peace” means He Himself is the definition of “peace”. Anyone who would like to receive spiritual peace will have to go through this Son of God.

Psalm 2 is another prophecy of the Messiah, as even the Jewish sages admit. Both Rashi and the Radak attributed Psalm 2 to the “King Messiah”. But verse 7 needs prayerful attention: “*The Lord said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you.’*”

God says to the Messiah that He is His Son. Then in verse 12 God commands “kiss this Son”, meaning, to worship and bow to Him. Isn’t that interesting? These verses refer to the Messiah, who in contrast to David (who ruled over a small group of people and not over all the Gentiles), the Messiah will rule over the entire creation. In this passage as well, the Son of

God is the Messiah. Now the interesting commentary on this section found in **the Babylonian Talmud**, Tractate Sukkah, chapter 5 will demand even more attention:

“To the Messiah, son of David, who is destined to be revealed speedily in our days, the Holy One, blessed be He, will say, ‘Ask something from Me, and I shall give it to you,’ so it is said I will tell of the decree... this day have I begotten you (Psalm 2:7) ask of me and I will give the nations for your inheritance, when He sees the Messiah, son of Joseph, killed.”

SO, EVEN THE BABYLONIAN
TALMUD ATTRIBUTES THE
“SON OF GOD IDENTITY
TO THE MESSIAH.

In conclusion, “Son of God” is a name for the Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures. To worship and praise the Son of God is the same as to worship and praise God. All this stands in absolute contrast against the pagan mythologies, in which one god connects with a goddess, and together they produce a son. The term “Son of God” is a biblical and scriptural term, intended to represent the way God comes to earth and reveals Himself to human beings, in the image of the Messiah. Yet it comes as no surprise that many rabbis even today would attempt to gloss over those who believe in Jesus as idolaters and pagans.



Chapter 7

When Will the Messiah Come?

According to the book of Daniel, the Messiah has to appear no later than 483 years after the year 445 BC.

In the Bible, the prophet Daniel records a prophecy that reveals in a very detailed and amazing way the exact time of the coming of the Messiah. But something in this prophecy bothered the Sages so much that they wrote in the Mishna that the book of Daniel is so holy it defiles the readers' hands. Therefore, the average Jew must not even come close to this book. Daniel Chapter 9 contains one of the most important prophecies in the Bible. Why? It's because this prophecy foresees the exact time of the coming of the Messiah. And not less importantly, what would happen to him.

Babylon, 538 BC. King Darius is on the throne. The head of his courtiers, Daniel the prophet, turns to God after he reads in the book of Jeremiah that the Babylonian Exile would last 70 years. Since the Babylonian Exile began in the year 605 BC, that would mean it was about to end. Therefore, Daniel comes before God, praying, repenting and fasting. He confesses the sins of the people of Israel and pleads with God to forgive them and bring his people back to Israel. He pleads for the restoration of Jerusalem's glory and, of course, for the rebuilding of the temple that was destroyed. Since the 70th year of Exile was drawing close, and Israel was still in Babylon, Daniel began to make intercession for his people. Responding to his prayer God sends the angel Gabriel with an answer.

"Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of the

Messiah the Prince there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with streets and a trench, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.” (Daniel 9:24-26).

The physical exile of the people of Israel away from the land of Israel was always connected to the spiritual exile of Israel from the God of Israel. The angel Gabriel was sent by God to confirm a reversal of the exile and more good news, the hope for a Messiah. When will that happen?

In 7 weeks and 62 weeks ... In other words: another 483 years.

The counting of those 483 years was to start when the command went out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. According to the angel Gabriel, Jerusalem would be “...built again with streets and a trench...” (Daniel 9:25). “Streets”, during the time of the Scriptures, is what today would be called a “city gate”: the protected space of the city, the center of life. The wall and gates were part of that protected area like that described in 2 Chronicles 32. “A trench” refers to a moat that is a part of the protection system of a city. In ancient times, it was a common method of protection to dig a deep moat around the city walls. Thus, in view of the mentioning of “street and trench” it is understood that the starting point for prophetic timing is when the order was given to rebuild the city of Jerusalem as a whole.

That command was sent out in the year 445 BC when the King of Persia, Artaxerxes, gave Nehemiah the required order to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Nehemiah 2:1-8). Therefore according to the prophecy in Daniel, **483 years after the year 445 BC, the Messiah would come.**

**WHAT WOULD THE MESSIAH COME TO DO?
To solve the problem of sin and iniquity.**

That's just the introduction. Now, things are starting to heat up a little... The biblical term “the Messiah the Prince” is similar to the term “King

Messiah". Gabriel says that from the issuing of the command until the coming of the Messiah Prince, 69 "weeks of years" will pass. That means, 483 years.

DEAR READER,
PAY ATTENTION TO THIS.

So, according to the book of Daniel, the Messiah has to appear no later than 483 years after the year 445 BC. And what will his mission be? "... *to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity.*" In other words, to solve the problem of mankind's sin once and for all. It's important to remember that during the time of Daniel's prophecy, one year equaled 360 days. Thus, **483 years after the issuing of Artaxerxes' command is the year 32 AD.**

Whoever takes the Bible seriously needs to understand that the deadline for the Messiah's coming ended almost 2000 years ago.

The Messiah must die a violent death. In verse 26 Gabriel points out that "*the anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing.*" The term "cut off" describes his execution. Earlier he was described as "Messiah Prince", i.e. "Messiah King", but now he is described as a Messiah who has nothing. That means his royal status will be taken from him: Instead of the glory of a King, he would endure unprecedented humiliation. Instead of ruling, he would be despised as a tortured slave.

After these events, the Angel Gabriel points out that: "*The city and the sanctuary will be destroyed*" (Daniel 9:27). This means that the city of Jerusalem and the temple will be demolished. And indeed, after the Messiah was humiliated, beaten and cut off, in the year 70 AD, that's exactly what happened. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was a deep trauma for the Jewish people. So... which famous Jew walked the land in the year 32 AD, was humiliated, killed, and believed to be the Messiah - all before the destruction of the temple in 70 AD?

Back on the day of Jesus' crucifixion a very interesting series of events took place and they were recorded in the New Testament. Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. Pilate gave the order that this would be written on

his cross: “Yeshua from Nazareth, King of the Jews.” The historian Luke writes in his gospel, *“It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour while the sun’s light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.”* (Luke 23:44-45).

To sum up: According to the prophecy in Daniel 9, the coming and the violent death of the Messiah King is calculated to the year 32 AD – before the destruction of the temple. The Messiah King had to be rejected, to suffer and to die because of mankind’s sins - the death of the Messiah King was a sacrifice and atonement.

THAT'S A REAL KING.

He is a king who is willing to humble himself and leave his heavenly throne, not in order to be served by man but in order to serve man. He is not a king who is hiding in his palace, behind soldiers who protect him with their lives, but a king who gives his life, not only for his beloved ones, his covenant people, but even for his haters.

THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD.

He is a loving king who was willing to reveal himself to mankind, coming in the likeness of men. He lived the perfect life and still allowed us to reject him, to humiliate him, and who took on himself the punishment that all mankind deserved.

THIS IS REAL LOVE.

This is a king who is worthy to be followed. Or, as Jesus himself said: *“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends”* (John 15:12-13).

By the way, it’s interesting to see that although it is forbidden to come close to the book of Daniel, Rashi did connect verse 27 to the days of the Messiah King: *“And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering.*

And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decree end is poured out on the desolator." However, Rashi disconnected it completely from the rest of the chapter, and from the timetable laid out in it. Why? For the same reason the sages accused Daniel of being wrong in his calculation: "So the Rabbi said: Daniel erred in his calculation." (Scroll 12, 71). By now, it should be clear to the reader why the Sages did not want the People of the Book to come into contact with the book of Daniel. Rambam adds that it is forbidden to try and calculate the coming of the Messiah: "A person should never busy himself with the Aggadot...one should not calculate the ends."

They expend all this effort to hide the reality that Daniel's prophecy talks about Yeshua the Messiah. God's truth can stand against any test so it makes sense for seekers of truth to research, to read the Bible for yourselves and take back the key to knowledge that was taken away from you.



Chapter 8

New Covenant Prophecy (Jeremiah 31)

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord.”

Was this a quote from the New Testament? Not at all. This is a prophecy given hundreds of years earlier, recorded in the Old Testament in the 31st chapter of the book of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:31-32). It says that since the people of Israel failed to keep the covenant God made with them at Sinai, He will make a new covenant - different to the Sinaitic covenant. This new covenant does not mean that God discards His people. FACT: the new covenant was made first and foremost with Israel, and from there on, to the rest of the world.

“Torah” in the context of this covenant means “law”. The laws come with the covenant, just as a contract comes with conditions. The Sinaitic covenant came with 613 commandments. Though the contract, the covenant, that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai was broken, and the 613 commandments of the covenant were not kept, God promised in His rich mercy to make a new covenant - a new contract. This new covenant is one among many covenants in the Bible: For example, the covenant with Noah, the covenant with Abraham, the covenant with David and so on. The new covenant that Jeremiah prophesied is the final one. All the other covenants point towards it.

So, why the need for a new covenant? God promised in the Sinaitic covenant that He would never break the covenant from His side, but the people of Israel failed to keep their side. Again ... and again ... and again.

They did not fulfill their part of the covenant. One can read dozens of examples where God rebukes the people of Israel for not keeping the covenant. Here are some of them:

“...and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them” (Deut. 31:16-17).

“...this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice” (Judges 2:20).

“And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God” (Judges 3:7).

“He (Elijah) said, ‘I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword’” (1 Kings 19:14).

“For they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant” (Isaiah 24:5).

“The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant that I made with their fathers” (Jeremiah 11:10).

“...and we have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by walking in His laws, which He set before us by his servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice” (Daniel 9:10-11). Additional examples can be found throughout the whole Bible.

Our chapter began with Jeremiah 31:31-32. Continuing on from there: “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts” (Jeremiah 31:33).

The main difference between the Sinaitic covenant and the new covenant is that the Sinaitic covenant was a collective, national covenant - distanced from the individual. The new covenant is not only for one specific

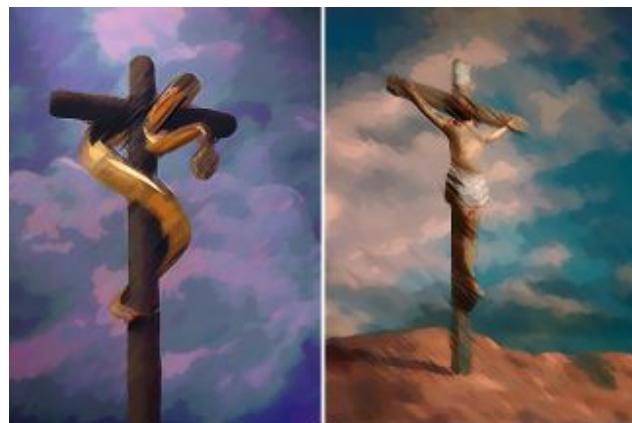
nation but is personal between man and God. This time, it was not received in a written form, on stone tablets, like the Sinaitic covenant. But rather, it is written by the Spirit right on the heart of each man and woman who enters into the covenant.

“And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest...” (Jeremiah 31:34).

When the Sinaitic covenant was established, people did not have direct access to God, but were dependent upon the priests as mediators. The priests were intermediaries for the people continually bringing sacrifices for the sins of the people. Now, within the new covenant, everyone has access to God: Little children and grownups, women and men, Jews and Gentiles.

Continuing on: *“For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34).*

Thanks to the one eternal sacrifice accomplished by the Messiah, God's people can enter into the new covenant through faith in the sacrificial work of the Messiah. It is like the time when the sons of Israel were in the desert, troubled by poisonous snakes and were instructed to look up to the bronze serpent and believe in order to be healed from the fatal venom. In a similar way, in the new covenant, we need to look up to the Messiah who was crucified, and believe. He took on Himself the fatal poison of our sins so that we might have life.



AND WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE NEW COVENANT? **Forgiveness of sin.**

The Sinaitic covenant teaches about God's holiness and His perfect demands. In the new covenant He reveals His grace and love. The new covenant reflects the immeasurable grace that God demonstrates towards His people. While His people failed to keep their side, God showed Himself in the person of the Messiah to carry the full weight of both sides of the new covenant. He allowed His own people to treat Him like a lamb on its way to the slaughter in order to be sacrificed. In His death He paid for sins and in His resurrection from the dead He gave victory over death and He gave the promise of eternal life. In the death and the resurrection of the Messiah, the new covenant was established: A covenant that solely depends on what the Messiah has done, and not on the failed attempts of mankind. However, as will be explained in chapter 18 "New Testament Bad for the Jews?", the new covenant does not make life easier or more comfortable. But rather, the Torah (teaching) of the Messiah makes life a lot more challenging.

By the way, even the Sages acknowledged this. See their words in the Talmud: "In the future, the Holy One will sit in the Garden of Eden and teach. And all the saints will sit before him... And the Holy One will sit and teach a new Torah, that will be given by the Messiah" (Yalkut Shimoni on Isaiah 26).

Or, according to the Apostle Paul who wrote in the New Testament:

"Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. So that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:20-21).

To sum up: God's own people failed and sinned against God, but God, rich in mercy, did something no one could do by taking the sins of mankind on Himself and offering free access to His Kingdom.



Chapter 9

Jesus Versus Moses

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers – it is to him you shall listen.” (Deut 18:15)

A very honorable place is reserved for Moses in the history of the people of Israel. And even though he was never a Rabbi, he received the nickname “Our Rabbi Moses”. He is the one who gave the Law to the chosen people, performed miracles and even prophesied about the coming of the Messiah. On top of that, he spoke with God face to face. But for one reason or another, some try to propagate the notion that the Messianic Jewish believers in Jesus reject Moses. They say “we believe in Moses, not in Jesus”. But there is a problem with this idea that you are forced to believe in either one or the other. Messianic Jews do not reject Moses when following Jesus. As it should become obvious to those who read on, the Bible doesn't force this choice on us, and neither do the Sages.

JESUS AND MOSES DO NOT COMPETE WITH EACH OTHER.

On the contrary, Moses points to the Messiah – to Jesus. In Deuteronomy 18:15 Moses says: *“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers – it is to him you shall listen.”*

Moses tells the people to prepare, because in the future, someone else will come to whom they must listen. Rabbi Levi ben Gershon, from the 14th century, explained that this prophet is the Messiah and acknowledged that one of the roles of the Messiah is to cause the nations, meaning the Gentiles, to worship God. Is it not obvious who has caused millions of Gentiles to worship the God of Israel? After Moses, the prophets continued

to anticipate that one who was to come, one who would be greater than Moses. The coming Messiah. Even the Sages agree on this.

In the Talmud, tractate Sanhedrin 99a, it says: “All the prophets prophesied not but of the days of the Messiah.”

In Midrash Tanhuma, Toledot 14, it says: “A song of ascents, I lift my eyes to the hills. Who are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you are a plain; It is Messiah Son of David. And why does he call him great mountain? Because he is greater than the Fathers As it was said in Isaiah 52: ‘Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.’ Loftier than Abraham, higher than Isaac, more exalted than Jacob and more elevated than Moses.... As he said : ‘that you should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom’... and higher than the ministering angels, as it was said: ‘and the rims were full of eyes.’ and who is he? It’s Messiah.”

In simple words, Midrash Tanhuma claims that the Messiah will be greater than Moses and the patriarchs.

JESUS WAS A PROPHET

A true and faithful prophet had two roles: First, he had to deliver God’s Word to the people, which wasn’t always an easy or pleasant task. For example, Isaiah’s first prophecies attack the morality and corruption of the leaders of the people in his time. The second role of the prophet is to foretell the future in a precise way, with specific predictions. God warned the people to guard against false prophets, whose prophecies don’t come to pass. A prophet who was wrong faced the death penalty. As with the rest of the Old Testament prophets, Jesus also fulfilled both roles: He delivered the Word of God to the people; a message that many times was not pleasant to the ears of the religious Jewish leaders who, as we know, were very corrupt at that time and therefore rejected his Messiahship. Also, Jesus predicted the future. For example, he predicted the imminent destruction of Jerusalem, which came to pass about 40 years later, in the year 70 AD. And as with many other prophets, Jesus also performed signs and wonders and healed the sick. However, unlike the false prophets, Jesus didn’t do it in the

name of other gods, but in the name of the God of Israel. Also, Jesus performed the Messiah Miracles: four miracles that are reserved for the Messiah, which only He could perform. These four miracles and the question "Did Jesus use Magic and Sorcery?" will be answered in more detail after the midpoint of this book.

"LIKE MOSES"

The Prophet promised by God, should be "like Moses". In the book of Numbers, Pharaoh gave an order to kill all the baby boys among the People of Israel. When Moses was born, his parents had to hide him to save his life. Many centuries later, just like Pharaoh had done, King Herod gave an order to kill all males among the People of Israel under the age of two because he feared the Messiah who was about to be born. In order to save Jesus, Joseph and Miriam (Mary) fled to Egypt. Moses appeared to the People of Israel in Egypt and delivered them from slavery just like Jesus came out of Egypt to deliver the People of Israel, although on this deliverance it was in the spiritual realm - deliverance from slavery to sin and death.

The New Testament documents a conversation between Jesus and some people, who like the rabbis, were not very happy with him:

"So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " (John 6:30-31). Jesus' answer caught everyone by surprise: *"I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die."* (John 6:48-50).

In other words, Jesus claimed that Moses brought physical bread, so that the physical body may live, but He gives a better bread, Himself, a spiritual bread that will be a source of eternal life for all who believe in Him.

As stated in the previous chapter, **the prophet Jeremiah** also foretold the Messiah and the new covenant, specifically in his reference to Moses and his Law in Jeremiah 31 where Jeremiah prophesies before the people, that because they broke the Mosaic Covenant, God will make a new covenant.

In conclusion, Moses performed miracles, delivered his people from physical slavery and gave his people the Law. Moses was a great and wonderful man, but he himself pointed to one greater and more wonderful than him, to Jesus the Messiah whose coming was foretold long in advance by the prophets. In Him was given a new covenant, a covenant of love.



"Reading Moses - Seeing Jesus" by Seth Postell, Eitan Bar and Erez Soref

[Available at Amazon.com](#):

Chapter 10

Parallels Between Joseph and David That Point to the Messiah

"The reason the Biblical narrator chose to portray David's story in light of that of Joseph is to ask the question: 'Is David Messiah son of Joseph, or should we wait for another?'"

Often we read a passage in a book that brings to memory something from another story we have come across in the past, creating an association between different stories and characters. This is very much the Jewish way to read the Bible – one story triggers associations of another - the Bible is full of echoes and parallels. God has designed it that way. We need to pay attention to the parallels and patterns in the Bible, because they were purposely woven together as another form of Messianic prophecy.

Professor of Biblical studies, Dr. Yair Zakovitch, explains in his book *Through the Looking Glass – Reflection Stories in the Bible*: “The Biblical narrator does his best to inspire the reader to pay attention to the mirroring associations between the stories, especially those who are set far apart in time from one another”. Similarly, Rabbi Amnon Dov Bazak, from Herzog College writes: “Explicit parallelism between various events is an accepted practice of the Old Testament itself. Quite often we find that various characters in the Old Testament refer to an earlier event in order to ascribe strength and validity to their message” (*When Parallels Meet: Linguistic Parallels in the Book of Samuel*).

The reader learns to identify key figures based on past characters with whom he is well familiar already. Therefore, a Jew well-versed in the Biblical narratives will expect the image of Messiah to mirror those of existing Biblical characters. Two key characters that are commonly seen as prefiguring the Messiah are Joseph and David. Not only do they serve as a pattern that will point to the coming Messiah, but they also echo one another.

JOSEPH MIRRORS DAVID

Between the stories of Joseph and David are many literary parallels, relating the two in our minds. Also, it's interesting to note that where one fails, the other succeeds. For instance, Joseph does not succumb to the temptation set before him by Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:7), while King David does succumb and commits adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 11:2-4). Both characters had to endure suffering and rejection as preparation for the greatness they achieved later on. Indeed, both endured difficult trials that formed their character and prepared them to grow into the rulers they eventually became (Gen. 37-41; 1 Sam. 17, 2 Sam. 11).

Here are some of the most obvious parallels in the stories that contain linguistic affinities between the description of the life of Joseph and that of the life of King David:

Joseph's older brothers go away from their home, and likewise so do David's brothers. Then Joseph and David are both sent to check on their brothers.

- “Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, ‘Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.’ And he said to him, ‘Here I am.’ So he said to him, ‘Go now, see if it is well with your brothers...’ ” (Gen. 37:12-14).
- “The three oldest sons of Jesse ... went to the battle... And David ... ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers.”; “Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, ‘Send me David your son, who is with the sheep.’ ” (1 Sam. 17:13, 22; 16:19).

Joseph was a youngster and among the youngest in his family, and so was David. These two young men were the ones chosen among their brothers for a great mission designed to serve and save their nation.

- “Then Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Are all your sons [lit. boys] here?’ And he said, ‘There remains yet the youngest’; Then Samuel took the horn

of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.” (1 Sam. 16:11, 13).

- “Joseph, being seventeen years old... He was a boy... His brothers said to him, ‘Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?’ ” (Gen. 37:2, 8).

Joseph shepherded his family’s flocks, and so did David.

- “Joseph... was pasturing the flock with his brothers” (Gen. 37:2).
- “David ... to feed [lit. shepherd] his father’s sheep. (1 Sam. 17:15).

Just as Joseph’s brothers treated him with sarcasm and cynicism, so did David’s brothers. Yoma tractate in the Mishna also points this out along with more connections between the stories of Joseph and David (Yoma, Day of Assembly, addendums and letters, 251).

- “They [his brothers] hated him even more”, “they conspired against him to kill him. They said to one another, ‘Here comes this dreamer.’ ” (Gen. 37:5, 18, 19).
- “Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab’s anger was kindled against David, and he said, ‘Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart.’ ” (1 Sam. 17:28).

Joseph’s father tells him to go check on his brothers’ welfare, as did David’s father.

- “And Israel said to Joseph, ‘Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.’ And he said to him, ‘Here I am.’ So he said to him, ‘Go now, see if it is well with your brothers.’ ” (Gen. 37:13-14).
- “And Jesse said to David his son, ‘Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. Also take these ten cheeses to the

commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well.’ ” (1 Sam. 17:17-18).

The robe of many colors in the stories of Joseph and David symbolizes times of struggle and sin that brought about much sorrow to both Joseph and David. Joseph’s robe was stripped off him and dipped in blood, symbolizing the struggle he had with his brothers who rejected him and wished him harm. Whereas the multi colored robe in David’s story was torn and represents the bad news King David received.

- “So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore”, “ Then they took Joseph’s robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood.” (Gen. 37:23, 31).
- “And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe [lit. robe of many colors] that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went”, “When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry.” (2 Sam. 13:19, 21).

Both Joseph and David were married by the king. Both were also married to women who were not Israelites.

- “And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On.” (Gen. 41:45).
- “And Saul gave him his daughter Michal for a wife.” (1 Sam. 18:27).

Joseph was thirty years old when he came into position and honor, and David too was thirty when he received honor and position among the people. Both “went out” (נָסַע) over the people, both are beloved by “Israel”.

- “Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons”, “So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt. Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt.” (Gen. 37:3; 41:45-46).

- “So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people. And David had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him. And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in fearful awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them”, “David was thirty years old when he began to reign” (1 Sam. 18:13-16; 2 Sam. 5:4).

The rulers reigning above Joseph and David both see (and fear) that God is with them and that they are “wise”.

- “His master saw that the Lord was with him”, “Now therefore let Pharaoh select [lit. see – יְרֹא] a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt.” (Gen. 39:3; 41:33).
- “... man of valor, a man of war, prudent [lit. wise – נָבֹן] in speech, and a man of good presence, and the Lord is with him”, “Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him.” (1 Sam. 16:18; 18:12).

Both Joseph and David are described as יְפֵה מְرָאָה – handsome.

- “Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance” (Gen. 39:6).
- “And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance” (1 Sam. 17:42)

Joseph and David both were faced with sexual temptation by a married woman, a foreigner, while they were alone. Both faced punishment because of that temptation. David was punished justly for he did sin, whereas Joseph's punishment was unjust since he was innocent (Gen. 39, 2 Sam. 11, 12).

- “Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And after a time his master’s wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, ‘Lie with me.’ ” ... “ ‘How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?’ ” (Gen. 39:6-7, 9).

- “[David] saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful... So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house... But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.” (2 Sam. 11:2, 4, 27).

According to Bible scholar Amnon Bazak, Joseph and David are the only two biblical characters that were ever described as “handsome” and “wise”. In addition to that, they are the only two described as being “thirty years old” and the usage of the term “robe of many colors” (כהונת-הפסים) is unique to these two stories.

IN THE SAME MANNER THAT JOSEPH
AND DAVID'S CHARACTERS POINT
TO ONE ANOTHER, THEY ALSO POINT
TO THE CHARACTER OF MESSIAH

There is an ancient Jewish midrash written by R' Zalman Baruch Melamed explaining how both Joseph and David are both forerunners of the anticipated Messiah:

“Joseph is the breaker making a way, and in the future it is expressed by the fact that there is Messiah son of Joseph and Messiah son of David. Messiah son of Joseph's actions are unknown, he appears in an external reality, unrecognized, unclear, as if there is no holiness in him. ‘And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him’ (Gen. 42:8), in the book Kol HaTor it is said that the brothers do not understand and do not recognize the degree of Messiah son of Joseph, they do not recognize the holiness found in these actions, they think these are negative actions, external and secular and not containing any internal content of holiness, but that is the way of Messiah son of Joseph and of Joseph – his internal aspects are extremely strong whereas externally he seems otherwise.

On the other hand, the strength of Messiah son of Joseph is: ‘the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands’ (Gen. 39:3). He is to advance and succeed through the troubles and misunderstandings. His job is

to always be first, the one pushing forward – yet not the finisher, the finisher is Messiah son of David. Here too at the beginning we find the concept of ‘like father, like son’, Joseph is the first, the one leading, he is the ruler that leads and guides all his brothers... Joseph had to go through the whole difficult ordeal he had been through, in order to reach the fulfillment and the revealing of this special character, this special ‘Josephism.’” (Hebrew original: <http://www.yeshiva.org.il/midrash/23213>)

PARALLELS BETWEEN JOSEPH AND JESUS THE SUFFERING MESSIAH SON OF JOSEPH

The reason the Biblical narrator chose to portray David’s story in light of that of Joseph is to ask the question: “Is David Messiah son of Joseph, or should we wait for another?” Though David is also considered to be a Messianic prototype in some ways, he is not THE promised one who will complete the task without sin, the Messiah. Since the character of Joseph is undoubtedly the “prototypical” character of Messiah, we can see that Yeshua is indeed the parallel to the image of Joseph and as such answers the definition of “Messiah son of Joseph”.

- Both were despised
- Thirty years old was a key time in their story
- Stripped of their clothing
- Became a servant
- Resisted temptation
- Described as a shepherd
- Knew what their future held
- Accused of being a dreamer
- The intended target of a conspiracy to kill

- Sold to gentiles for silver coins
- Falsely accused
- Suffered as result of rejection
- Spent time alone deep under the ground
- Counted among criminals
- Gave hope to a criminal
- Considered dead
- Appeared foreign and belonging to gentiles
- Not recognized by their brothers
- Unidentified and unrecognized
- Raised up from the earth
- Acted as an advocate
- Provided food
- Reconciliation at the end of the story
- Ended up as rulers, against all expectations

Note: please remember that Joseph's brothers represent the whole of the tribes of Israel and therefore the entire people of Israel (even though Joseph is one of Jacob's sons, he is set apart from his brothers as evidenced by the fact that there is no tribe named directly after him. Likewise, Jesus, though a part of the people of Israel, is set apart from them.)

THE SUFFERING MESSIAH
 SON OF JOSEPH
 IS ALSO
 THE VICTORIOUS MESSIAH
 SON OF DAVID

The Bible tells the story of the life of David in light of that of Joseph. David did not fulfill the expectations set for “Messiah son of Joseph”, but fell into sin, a fact that leads the reader to look expectantly to the future, to the one that will come and not sin, to Messiah, to Jesus. The characters of Joseph and David are prototypes of Messiah.

These are not two separate messiahs, just like Joseph and David are two individual people, but one messianic pattern. A pattern of the character of Messiah, who will first be rejected and suffer undeservedly, and later become ruler and king. Joseph was rejected, suffered and punished for crimes he did not commit, because his brothers considered his behavior and speech to be condescending and prideful. Yet because of the suffering and rejection he endured, the lives of his brothers and his family were later spared, and a wonderful blessing ensued to all nations thanks to him!

Likewise, Jesus, when he first came, was rejected, suffered and punished, not for his own sins, but because his “brethren” interpreted his behavior and words as condescending. But like Joseph, through his suffering, his rejection and death, forgiveness of sins is now offered, and like Joseph, Jesus’ life is a blessing to all nations!



Chapter 11

Why Messiah Must be God

“God can choose to reveal himself in whatever form he pleases...”

Does the New Testament turn a mere man into God? This is what New Testament critic Rabbi Daniel Asor thinks. “The Bible rejects pagan idolatry that revolves around human-like gods, men as gods.”

CORRECT.

The Bible does indeed reject such pagan idolatry. In the pagan cultures of the East, gurus believe they can climb up a religious ladder until they get to the highest step of becoming a god. This is idolatry - no doubt. But is that what the Bible and the New Testament teach? Of course not! But the rabbis want people to think it is.

According to the Old Testament, God is not human. Rather, God is Spirit. However, God can choose to reveal himself in whatever form he pleases. This is what he did throughout the whole Bible. The New Testament didn't dream up something new. It clarified what the Old Testament presents already in its entirety ... namely that God would reveal himself to his people in the person of the Messiah.

Rabbi Tovia Singer mocks this idea: “Whoever thinks that God came down to us, manifested as anything, whether as cottage cheese or Jesus, such a person is going to the eternal fire of hell.”

But what does the Old Testament itself teach about this? What did Second Temple Judaism hold to regarding the deity of the Messiah, and what did the Sages believe? Many would be surprised to learn of the concept of Metatron in the book of the Zohar and the writings of the Sages. Metatron is described as the prince of the world and power of God, and has

the characteristics of God himself. He is said to be the highest being in the celestial hierarchy. Just like God himself, he too sits on God's throne of glory, and on his head, he wears the crown through which the universe was created. His attire is God's light and is called "the little God".

Professor Idel, head of the department in Jewish thought at Hebrew University, describes Metatron's nature and position as: "Half man, half God ... he fixes the problem of human sin and fulfills humans actual purpose." The book of the Zohar describes the character and nature of Metatron as carrying the image of God, representing God to his creation. He's described as the angel of the covenant, as the son of God. He is the small God, as God's firstborn, as mediator to God. He is overseer to the tree of life, as the King's representative, responsible for the whole creation and more. It's interesting that whoever reads the New Testament will discover that Jesus the Messiah is defined in almost the exact same way. But the New Testament was written a long time before the book of the Zohar and even before the Sages. Although the Sages understood that God does indeed reveal himself to humanity, they chose not to recognize Jesus, the God-sent Messiah, so they made their own alternative: Metatron.

The idea that God reveals himself to humanity in human likeness is based on the Old Testament. The Old Testament is full of examples and prophecies that the promised Messiah would be God himself. In his love, the Bible says he would come and live among us, reveal himself to us, and even willingly suffer with us and for us. He would die to bring a perfect sacrifice for our sins. Where does it say this?

A FEW EXAMPLES:

Starting with Genesis 3, "*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate. '''*

This means that Adam and Eve are talking to and are physically with God who is walking in the Garden.

In Genesis 18, the Lord appears to the patriarch Abraham. *“And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant”* (Genesis 18:1-3). Deeper into the chapter, in verse 22, the text says explicitly: *“So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord.”*

While the angels were leaving, God stayed with Abraham. “YHWH”, the Lord, He is the one who appeared to Abraham. And Abraham indeed identifies one of the angels as God. For this reason, he bows before him and invites him to eat with him.

The Talmud acknowledges this too. In the tractate Bava Metzia 76, God himself comes to visit Abraham. Rabbi Steinsaltz interprets the passage: “He came out and saw the Lord, standing in the entrance. He who said ‘Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.’” Again in verse 13, God who is eating with Abraham, asks him a question: “The Lord said to Abraham, ‘Why did Sarah laugh ...’” These verses cannot be understood in a different way other than the straightforward meaning where one of the three talking with Abraham is identified as God Himself. And he promises Abraham that he will come back in a year after a son has been born to Sarah. Sarah hears this and laughs then God answers her. There is no other way in which this chapter can be understood. Abraham, Sarah and God were all physically partaking in this dinner and conversation. God had appeared to them with dust on his feet and all that comes with a physical manifestation. It is an amazing chapter to say the least. No doubt, if these verses were written in the New Testament instead of the Old Testament, the rabbis would mock us and ask us if God gained weight after the dinner. These are typical of the sorts of responses the rabbis make, attacking the idea that God revealed himself in Jesus the Messiah when he took on flesh. If God appears “in the flesh” to Abraham for several hours, what could stop him from taking on flesh in the person of the Messiah for several years?

Prophecy about the Messiah King: Jeremiah 23. “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days, Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord our righteousness’” (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

“Branch” is a common term for the Messiah. Jeremiah prophesies that this branch from the line of David will bring salvation to Israel. And what will be his name? The Lord our righteousness. In the Old Testament, no one except for God himself is called YHWH, (Lord) but here the Messiah receives the name “the Lord our righteousness” as opposed to names like Daniel (the Lord is my judge) or Elinadav (My Lord is gracious). Here the explicit name of God is mentioned - Y-H-W-H.

IS THIS A “CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION?” WHAT DO THE SAGES SAY?

Midrash Proverbs section 19: “Ray Huna says the seven names of Messiah are Ynon, the Lord our righteousness, branch, consoler, David, Shilo and Elijah.”

Midrash Lamentations 1: “What is the name of Messiah King? Rabbi Abba Bar Kahana says: ‘The Lord’ is his name, and this is what they will call him: ‘The Lord our righteousness’.”

According to **Rabbi Johanan bar Nappaha**, the Messiah will be called by the name of God. “Rabbi Johanan said: ‘Those three will be called by God’s name: The righteous ones, the Messiah and Jerusalem... the Messiah as it is written (Jeremiah 23) and this is the name that they will call him: ‘The Lord our Righteousness.’”

Minor tractate, Soferim 13, Halakha 12: “We ... God our Lord in Elijah the prophet, your servant and in the kingdom of David your Messiah soon he will come and appear to his sons and on his throne will sit no one else and he will give his glory to no other. Because by your holy name you

promised him that his lamp will not be put out forever. ‘In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely, and this is the name he will be called: the Lord our Righteousness.’ Blessed be you, o Lord, who raises up a horn of salvation for his people Israel.” Also here, the Messiah is identified as “The Lord our Righteousness,” referring to Jeremiah 23. “When they both confessed their deeds Judah was set side by side with Ruben. Since: to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God Judah confessed and therefore inherited the kingdom and from him will come the Messiah that will save Israel as it is written: ‘In his days Judah will be saved’” (Tzror Hamor, Genesis Vayechi).

The commentator explains that Judah acted rightly, and that from him the Messiah would come. He bases this on Jeremiah 23 verse 6. In other words, he too sees in this verse a messianic prophecy declaring that the Messiah will be God.

Example from Jeremiah.

In ‘**Midrash Tehillim**’ it says that God calls the Messiah by his name. And what is his name? The answer is “the Lord of Hosts” and the Messiah we call “and this is the name he will be called: The Lord our righteousness.” Therefore, the messianic prophecy found in Jeremiah 23 teaches that the Messiah will be God himself. In this same way, the Sages themselves understood and taught this passage. By the way, based on this passage, some within the messianic group of Chabad insist that Rabbi Schneerson was King Messiah, God taking on flesh.

Micah.

(Micah 5:2) Rabbi David Kimhi interprets the passage. “His origins are from old, everlasting. In his time they will say that he is from everlasting... and this is God who is from old, from everlasting” (RaDaK on Micah 5:2). This means that the Messiah always existed. He’s eternal. He is God.

Zechariah.

In Zechariah 12, God tells the house of David that one day in the future they will look “*upon me, whom they have pierced.*” How can God be pierced unless he came to us in flesh and blood?

Talmud bavli: “It is said about the Messiah, Son of Joseph, that he will be killed, as it is written in Zechariah 12: ‘They looked on me, whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as for an only child’” (Tractate Sukkah, chapter 5).

Daniel.

In the book of Daniel, God descends in a cloud and appears as a man. To him the nations bring sacrifices, him they worship. *“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed”* (Daniel 7:13-14).

Old writings offer the most interesting conclusions about this passage. Scroll 4Q246, one of the Qumran scrolls, found at the Dead Sea, is dated back to the third century BC - long before Jesus and the New Testament. In this scroll, the messianic expectations of the Jews of that time are described. Back then, according to the prophecy in Daniel 7, they expected the Messiah to be the son of God. This means that according to early Judaism the Messiah was God. And those Jews cannot be labeled as “christian missionaries”.

Convincingly, if seen **from a philosophical and theological point of view the Messiah in fact must be God himself.** Since it is the Messiah’s main purpose to bring salvation, the Old Testament declares that God alone can save.

“*I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior*” (Isaiah 43:21).

“...And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a savior; there is none besides me” (Isaiah 45:21).

“But I am the Lord your God from the land of Egypt; you know no God but me, and besides me there is no savior” (Hosea 13:4).

Hence, God alone can save. And if salvation is the purpose of the Messiah, there is either a contradiction here or the Messiah indeed is God himself, the savior. Many more quotes could have been presented from the Old Testament and the writings of the Sages which show how God reveals himself in the form of a man and especially in the person of Messiah. But you should certainly get the idea by now. This is not some pagan, idol worshiping concept... or even a “christian” concept as some would disparagingly call it. By now, any honest seeker of truth should be able to see that God himself, the creator of the universe, loves us so much that he willingly humbled himself and appeared to us as a human - that he lived, suffered and died for us. It is simply an amazing thought. This thought should make us grateful on one hand and humble us in how we interact with others on the other hand. If God is perfect and gave his life for us imperfect beings, then how much more should we, imperfect people, be willing to make sacrifices for others.

JESUS CLAIMED TO BE GOD IN THE FLESH.

For example: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am”* (John 8:58). Or: *“I and the father are one”* (John 10:30). Also, the rest of the New Testament carries that idea when describing the life of Jesus. For example: Paul writes in his letter to the Colossians: *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together”* (Colossians 1:15-17). And: *“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily...”* (Colossians 2:9).

Considering Jesus' claim that he is God who came in the flesh, there are two possibilities: it is either true or a lie. If he was telling the truth, the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled and God has indeed revealed himself in the flesh, in the person of Messiah. Then all we need to do is receive him and his authority ... or reject him. If his claim is not true, we are confronted with two possibilities. He either knew that he was lying and therefore was a cheater. Or he was crazy. If Jesus was a liar, a selfish and corrupt cheater, how could he pretend to be the most pure and noble character that humanity ever knew from the beginning of his life until the end? It would be hard to explain his morally profound teachings, the high standards that he taught and the fact that he always based his words on the law and the prophets. An interesting reaction to this, believe it or not, comes from the atheists.

John Stuart Mill, a well-known philosopher, admits: "Jesus' life and teachings carry a seal of personal authenticity, and give a uniquely deep insight. He stood in the first row next to some of the greatest people that the human race could look up to. His incredible genius is mixed with the virtues of a man who as it seems is the moral ideal and the holiest of all that ever walked on this earth. And therefore, it is not a mistake to see in this man the ideal representative and leader of humanity. Even those who don't believe in him will have a hard time finding a better way than that of Jesus, a way that will enable to put in practice moral principles from words to actions" - John Stuart Mill.

So was Jesus just a lunatic with delusions of grandeur? Was he claiming to be God in a Jewish, monotheistic society, daring to tell them that their eternal destiny depended on their faith in him? This would not simply be a weird fantasy - it would be thoughts of a person who has gone completely insane. But does the life of Jesus fit the description of such a person?

The famous **Napoleon** gave his opinion: "I know people. And I tell you that Jesus is not a mere man. Everything about Jesus amazes me. His spirit instills fear in me and his will astonishes me. One cannot compare him to anyone else in this world. He is truly one of a kind. It is impossible to explain his ideas and opinions, the truth that he taught, his ability to convict others... The more I draw closer, the more carefully I examine things. All

this is way over my head, it remains something huge, enormous and supernatural. His faith is a revelation whose origin lays in reason whose source is undoubtedly not in men. It is impossible to find anything like his life, apart from him. I searched in history for someone who comes close to Jesus, to no avail. Or something comparable to the Gospel. But neither history, nor humanity, neither seasons nor nature, could offer something that could compare with Jesus. Neither could they explain him. Everything about him is simply extraordinary.”

Professor C.S. Lewis author of the “Narnia” books wrote: “The historical challenge to explain Jesus’ life, words and influence is exceedingly great. The contradiction between the depth, clarity and sharpness of his moral teaching and between the madness of grandeur that has to be hidden somewhere in his theological teachings. Unless he is truly God, his teaching has not been explained yet satisfactorily”.

One of the most convincing claims regarding the deity of Jesus is his resurrection from the dead. This is something humanity has had to wrestle with for 2000 years now.

To summarize, it is important for you to know what answer you will give to the question “who is Jesus?” at the end of days. You cannot simply put Jesus on the shelf with all the others as if he’s merely some sort of Guru. We are left with three options to choose from: he’s either a liar, a lunatic or God’s glorious revelation to humankind.

“Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” (John 14:9).



Part Two: Refuting Rabbinic Objections

(Refuting assorted rabbinic objections to
Christianity)

Chapter 12

“If Jesus is Indeed the Messiah – How Come there is no World Peace?”

There's "Messiah Son of Joseph", since Joseph was a prototype of Messiah who suffered greatly. Then "Messiah Son of David" will come after him, to reign and establish world peace.

If Jesus really is the Messiah, how come there is still war? After all, didn't the prophet Isaiah say, "*The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat*" (Isaiah 11:6)?

ISN'T THE COMING OF MESSIAH SUPPOSED TO BRING WORLD PEACE?

Rabbi Tovia Singer argues, “If Jesus were the Messiah, you would know it from reading the newspaper, because the front page, instead of being about wars, would be about peace. But since Jesus' time until today, more than one hundred and twenty million people have died in wars.”

In addition, **Rabbi Yossi Mizrachi says** that when the Messiah will come, “There will be no more wars in the world, everyone will dwell in

peace and the wolf shall dwell with the lamb.”

It's important to understand that the Bible does not say explicitly that “When the Messiah comes, there will be peace.” However, a biblical connection between the Messiah and peace cannot be denied – but it happens at a specific time and in specific context. The Messiah has different roles that must be fulfilled at different times. For example, the prophet Malachi wrote that the Messiah will refine and purify his creation. In other words, before he establishes peace, he will conquer and judge.

TWO WAYS TO EXPLAIN RABBINIC CONFUSION CONCERNING THE MESSIAH

First of all, the rabbis don't base their arguments on the Bible anymore, but on traditions from the Rabbinic literature (Talmud), which causes them to get confused among themselves about everything concerning the Messiah: his coming, his role, and his identity.

For example, Rabbi Yochanan claimed the Messiah will come when the Jewish people will succeed in keeping two Sabbaths. Rabbi Uziel Eliyahu claims it's impossible to know what will happen when the Messiah comes, saying: “When the King Messiah comes we won't know what will happen until it happens.” On the other hand, Rabbi Ya'akov Halevi Filber said that the coming of the Messiah depends on the Jewish people, and their good behavior. Rabbi Yitzhak Kaduri said the Messiah came in the twenty-first century. Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef said that when the Messiah comes, he will wipe out all the Arabs. Rabbi Haim Levi Yizhak Ginsburg claimed the Messiah is the Lubavitch rebbe, who died more than twenty years ago. Rabbi Obadiah Bartenura wrote that in every generation, a type of Messiah is born. Rabbi Akiva claimed Bar-Kochva was the Messiah, whereas Reform Judaism claims “the Messiah” is an era, rather than a person.

You see, the timing and roles of the Messiah according to the rabbis are so mixed up and confused that it's impossible to know which rabbi to believe.

The **second** reason for the confusion is that the Bible itself gives different descriptions of the roles the Messiah will play:

On one hand, it is written that the Messiah is to be rejected, suffer, and die.

On the other hand, it is written that the Messiah is to fight and judge.

It is also written that the Messiah is to establish world peace.

Sounds confusing, right? So much so, that in the Jewish Talmud there is an argument between the rabbis concerning the question, “Will the Messiah come humbly riding on a donkey or will he come as a warrior-king in the clouds?” There were even rabbis who suggested that the Messiah would come in the clouds riding on a flying donkey! The attempt to combine the different descriptions of the Messiah in the Bible has been the cause of great confusion amidst the Jewish sages.

One Messiah, two roles: Later, it was taught that the Bible does not speak of one Messiah but of two different Messiahs - one who will come first, will suffer, be rejected, and die. He is called “Messiah Son of Joseph”, since Joseph was a prototype of Messiah who suffered greatly. Then there will be a second one who will come after him, to reign and establish world peace, called “Messiah Son of David”. But the truth is, the Bible never speaks of two different Messiahs but of one Messiah having two different roles at different times. The one role has to do with “Messiah son of Joseph,” which took place in His first coming 2,000 years ago when He was rejected, suffered and died because of and for the sake of our sins.

But unlike our rabbis today, ancient Judaism (before the time of Jesus) believed the Bible spoke of only one Messiah, not of two. Researchers Wise and Tabor explain their thesis based on the Qumran scrolls. According to them, the Jewish community in Qumran during the third century B.C. believed that, “At first the Messiah will suffer and be defeated, but in the end he will rule and triumph in the last day.” In other words, establishing world peace will be the Messiah’s last step, in his second coming in the last days. The Messiah’s first role, fulfilled before the destruction of the temple

2,000 years ago, was to give himself in the place of the lambs that were sacrificed for sin. Just as the lambs had to be without flaws, the Messiah had to be perfect as well.

**BUT NO MAN IS PERFECT; ONLY GOD IS PERFECT.
THAT IS WHY THE MESSIAH HAS TO BE GOD HIMSELF.**

Only He can atone for our sins and, no, this isn't a foreign "Christian" line of thought, but a completely Jewish one!

Rabbi Menachem Brod writes: "Through his sufferings, the Messiah atones for his generation and enables every Jew to receive salvation "as it says: 'Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities.'" Rabbi Brod writes this based on Isaiah 53.

In the rabbinic Jewish book of Zohar, it is written that through the sufferings of the Messiah Israel is saved from judgment. This also is based on Isaiah 53.

The Ramban [Nachmanides] also interpreted Isaiah 53 to be about the Messiah: "The stripes by which he is vexed and distressed will heal us: God will pardon us for his righteousness, and we shall be healed both from our own transgressions and from the iniquities of our fathers."

Rabbi Moshe Alshich adds that the Messiah accepts the sufferings willingly. "Because he himself desires to bear them... and we esteemed that he would not take them himself but that he was stricken, smitten by God. But when the time comes that he will be revealed in all his majesty then all will see and understand how great is the strength of the one who suffers torments for that generation."

The prophet Zechariah (chapter 12) also prophesies that the Messiah will die by the piercing or the stabbing of his body and in his death, he will take our transgressions upon himself.

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”

Zechariah prophesied that one day the Jewish people will understand that they have pierced their Messiah and will mourn as one mourns over the death of a firstborn son.

Rabbinic Midrash “Yalkut Shimoni” attests: “It is clear that the Messiah, the Son of Joseph, is killed as it is written: “‘And they will look on me, on him whom they have pierced...’”

Rabbi Moshe Alshich adds to this, saying: “‘They shall look unto me’, for they shall lift up their eyes unto me in perfect repentance, “when they see him whom they pierced, that is, Messiah, the Son of Joseph; ...he will take upon himself all the guilt of Israel.” **Rashi, in ‘Tractate Sukkah’ 52** interprets Zechariah 12:10 saying, “And the land will mourn as in the prophecy of Zechariah, which prophesied of the future, that they will mourn for the Messiah son of Joseph that was killed....”

Without a doubt, the idea of a Messiah who would suffer for our sins was embedded deeply in the Jewish way of thinking. Jewish historian **Dr. Raphael Patai concludes:** “Despised and afflicted with unhealing wounds, he sits in the gates of Great Rome and winds and unwinds the bandages of his festering sores; as a Midrash expresses it, ‘pains have adopted him. According to one of the most moving, and at the same time psychologically most meaningful, of all Messiah legends, God, when He created the Messiah, gave him the choice of whether or not to accept the sufferings for the sins of Israel. And the Messiah answered, “I accept it with joy, so that not a single soul of Israel should perish.”

“In the later, Zoharic (mystical) formulation of this legend, the Messiah himself summons all the diseases, pains, and sufferings of Israel to come upon him, in order thus to ease the anguish of Israel, which otherwise would be unbearable” (Dr. Raphael Patai).

The idea of the Messiah son of Joseph suffering in our place and for our transgressions is indeed a Jewish idea. Jesus is the most famous Jewish person of all time and yet he was smitten, rejected, humiliated and was crucified. He is a Messiah with whom the Jews can identify, for the Jewish people have also been smitten, rejected, humiliated and were almost destroyed.

The good news is that the story doesn't end with the suffering and death of Jesus the Messiah. He rose again from the dead, and now all who believe in him are given a new life and complete forgiveness for their sins.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you..." (John 14:27).



Chapter 13

Messiah: Suffering Servant or Victorious King?

“...is the Messiah supposed to be a suffering son of Joseph, OR a reigning son of David?”

In order to dismiss the possibility that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, who suffered and died as a sacrifice for mankind's sins, rabbis of this present generation try to claim that the Messiah was never supposed to suffer or to die at all, but rather that the Messiah was to be a King who would come to save and conquer. Consider for example the words of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef who declared that when the Messiah comes, he will wipe out all the Arabs: “With one ‘poof’ he will blow them all away, who are the nations of the world? What are they? When the righteous Messiah comes he will not be afraid of anyone. And will send all these Arabs to hell.”

HOW DOES ONE ANSWER SUCH A "LIGHT TO THE GENTILES?"

But is the Messiah supposed to be a suffering son of Joseph, or a reigning son of David? Why is the concept of Messiah so confused in Judaism? Why are there so many different ideas of who the Messiah is in Judaism? Here are some answers.

As previously discussed, the Sages and all the wise men of Israel, up until the Middle Ages, interpreted Isaiah 53 as a prophecy about the suffering of the Messiah. The truth is that not one rabbi doubted that Isaiah 53 was about the Messiah until a thousand years after the time of Jesus. The alternative interpretation of that chapter only appeared due to the need to deny that Jesus was the very Messiah predicted in that chapter. In other words, the claim that the Messiah would only come to conquer, to rule and to reign, is currently how the rabbis hide the fact of a “suffering Messiah”

who does exist – or in other words, they hide Jesus from their people. But the reality is that the ancient sages of Israel recognized, understood and taught about the sufferings and death of Israel's Messiah.

In the Old Testament, there are seemingly contradictory descriptions regarding the character of the Messiah. At times he is rejected, suffers and dies and at times he rules, reigns and conquers. In classical Jewish thought, this contradiction resulted in the belief that two Messiahs would appear: one a conquering King, the "Messiah Son of David", while the other suffers and would be rejected by his people, the "Messiah Son of Joseph." But modern rabbis try to hide the idea of Messiah Son of Joseph, a suffering Messiah, from Jewish thought.

OTHER VOICES:

In his book "Days of Messiah", **Rabbi Menachem Brod** from the Chabad movement, writes: "By his suffering, the Messiah atones for his generation and enables every Jew to gain salvation. As it was said: '*Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;*'" He based this on Isaiah 53.

Even **the book of the Zohar** explains that by the Messiah's suffering, Israel is saved from judgment. This is also based on Isaiah 53. The Ramban interprets the chapter like this: "Because the stripes by which he is vexed and distressed will heal us; God will pardon us for his righteousness, and we shall be healed both from our own transgressions and from the iniquities of our fathers" (Zohar II, 1).

Rabbi Moshe El-Sheikh adds that the Messiah willingly accepts the suffering upon himself: "As he himself desires to carry them... And we thought of him as he would not take them upon himself, only he who is afflicted and smitten by God. But when the time will come for him to reveal himself in all his glory, then all will see and understand how great is the strength of the one who suffers for his generation." El-Sheikh also bases his interpretation on Isaiah 53.

But it was not only Isaiah who predicted the suffering of the Messiah for our transgressions and iniquities. **The prophet Zechariah** in chapter 12 also predicted that he would die by the piercing or puncturing of his body, and that in his death the Messiah would take our transgressions upon himself. Zechariah predicts that one day, the people of Israel will mourn for the one they pierced; the Messiah, as they mourn for the death of a firstborn son. Here are the verses again: *“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn”* (Zec. 12:10).

In **Yalkut Shimoni of the Talmud**, it was said about Zechariah's words: “As it was said on Messiah Son of Joseph who was killed, as it was written: ‘they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him...’” Rabbi Moshe El-Sheikh adds that: “‘they look on me’, they fixed their eyes on me in complete repentance, when they saw that the one they pierced, is Messiah Son of Joseph, who will take upon himself all the blame of Israel.” Rabbi El-Sheikh understood that Isaiah and Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah should suffer and die for the transgressions and iniquities of Israel.

Rashi, in Sukkah 52:71, interpreted Zechariah 12:10 saying, “‘The land shall mourn,’ is found in the prophecy of Zechariah, and he prophesies of the future, that they shall mourn on account of Messiah, the son of Joseph, who shall be slain...”

And indeed today, 2,000 years after the Messiah suffered for the transgressions of all, more and more Jews recognize that Jesus gave his life for them and took their sins upon himself. The many references of this suffering in the Talmud, in the Midrash, in the Zohar, and among Old Testament interpreters, serve as a reminder that classical Judaism actually believed in a suffering Messiah.

Is it a choice then between a suffering Messiah or a conquering Messiah - or can both be true? Regardless, modern rabbis like Rabbi Ovadia Yosef

and Rabbi Daniel Asor try to make Israel forget about the Suffering Messiah.

Jesus, the most famous Jew of all time, was beaten, rejected, humiliated and was hung on a cross. He is the Messiah with whom the Jewish people can identify with, as such a famous people group throughout history, who have also been beaten, rejected, humiliated and almost destroyed.

Jesus is the suffering Messiah, who gives life, redeems and provides victory to anyone who puts their trust in Him.



Chapter 14

Does the New Testament Suggest that God is Done With Israel?

“For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Romans 11:15).

The rabbis claim that it is forbidden for a Jewish person to read or even go near the New Testament. But this does not prevent many of them, who have never read or even touched the New Testament, from making all kinds of accusations against the book! They claim that it is anti-Semitic; that it teaches how God rejected the people of Israel and tossed them to the trash. So is the New Testament Anti-Semitic? As Rabbi Pinchas Badush said, when he answered the question on the “Mako” website: “Did Jesus establish Christianity?” He answered: “He was considered an establisher, and spread his ideas further on; That God has rejected the Chosen People, and has now decided to take a new People for himself. He called it the ‘New Covenant’. Christians acknowledge the Old Testament, but say that at some point, a switch was made.”

This of course is contradicting the Pentateuch (Law), that clearly says that God will never leave the people of Israel.

But in reality, what DOES the New Testament teach about the people of Israel? Does it say, as Rabbi Pinchas claims, that God rejected the people of Israel, tossed them to the trash and took another people instead? Or is there a certain prejudice and lack of knowledge behind statements like his? A little reminder:

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the

hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband...”

WAS THAT A QUOTE
FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT?
No.

As mentioned before, the speaker is the prophet Jeremiah from the Old Testament, chapter 31. He is prophesying that God will make a new covenant, instead of the covenant that was made during the exodus. And what does the New Testament have to say? Here are the words of the Apostle Paul from his letter to the Romans, chapter 11 in the New Testament, as he addresses the Gentiles; “*Now I am speaking to you Gentiles*”, and says to them: “*If some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.*”

The Apostle Paul warns the Gentiles... That the branches that were grafted in, should not be arrogant over the People of Israel, who are the root. This is after a statement he made just a few paragraphs earlier, in chapter 9, where he said to the same Gentiles: “*Has God rejected His people? By no means! God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.*” Even Gamliel, who was a great rabbi in the Sanhedrin recognized that Jesus and His disciples are a part of the people of Israel, and even though there's no record of him accepting the messiahship of Jesus, he warned those who opposed Jesus and His disciples:

“*But a Pharisee in the council named Gamliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men... keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!”*” (Acts: 34-39).

And indeed, just as Gamliel predicted, no one was able to overthrow God's plan which continues to spread to this day, all over the world. Instead of turning people against the New Testament, if the rabbis could overcome their fear and dared to read it, they would understand that it's a completely JEWISH book! The message of the New Testament is not about replacing Israel, as certain Christian denominations are unfortunately telling Jews today, but it is a message of love, grace and compassion – to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles. Now the challenge is thrown out for the reader to think for yourself - to read the New Testament and decide for yourself what it's about.



Chapter 15

Is Jesus Really from the Line of David?

Jesus was not only a branch from the royal line but also the priesthood.

According to several prophecies in the Old Testament, the Messiah must be a descendant of David. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul starts his letter to the church in Rome: “*Jesus the Messiah, our Lord, who was descended from David according to the flesh*” (Romans 1:3).

Son of David: In the past, nobody questioned that Jesus was a descendant of David, neither historians nor the Sages. This was because the genealogical scrolls of the people of Israel were accessible in the Temple. If somebody disagreed he would have speedily pointed out the mistake by referring to those documents. Everyone knew that Jesus was indeed a descendant of David. If Jesus was not from the Davidic line, both the priests and the Rabbis during Jesus’ time, not to mention the Talmud, would have pointed this out. However, in the Talmud Jesus is referred to as somebody who was considered a descendant of David. Had they known that it was not true they would have used the opportunity to point this out. However, that never happened. Rather, in the Talmud, Sanhedrin 43, page 1, it is said that Jesus was “close to the Kingdom.”

The line of a King and the line of a Priest: Indeed, according to the New Testament documents, Jesus was not only a branch from the royal line but also the priesthood. The New Testament says that Jesus was a descendant of David from both sides of his parents, both in regard to his biological mother’s ancestry and of his adoptive father, Joseph. In Judaism, an adoptive father was always considered father in every respect. Based upon this, among the nations as well the notion of “*apotropos*” (guardianship) evolved. The following rabbinical commentary supports this:

“On what basis do we relate Aaron’s sons with Moses? Since he taught them Torah. And it is written about him as if he begot them. And therefore it is said that on the day that the Lord spoke to Moses at Sinai: Who made the sons of Aaron be called by Moses? The Torah that God spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai. Thus you should teach that whoever teaches his friend’s son Torah the scriptures say that he has begotten him” (Midrash Aggada, Numbers 3, A).

Simply put, the commentary states that Moses was the father of Aaron’s sons only because he taught them Torah. And next to that, the Jewish tradition itself states that the Messiah should not have a biological father.

In addition, to quote Professor Hananel Mak, Talmud Department University of Bar Ilan from his work on Rashi’s Rabbi, Rav Moshe HaDarshan:

“The commentary is based on the combination of the human character of the Messiah who does not have a father of flesh and blood, the prophecy of the suffering and servile servant of Isaiah 53, which is the section “My servant will act wisely” and Psalm 110, that describes the relationship of God with the one sitting at his right and with Melchizedek” (Professor Hananel Mak).

Therefore, Professor Hananel Mak acknowledges that Rabbi Moshe HaDarshan, admired by Rashi, interpreted from Isaiah 53 that the Messiah would not have a biological father.

With the destruction of the second temple the genealogical scrolls were also destroyed. Therefore, in our days, there is no way to know someone’s exact ancestry. This is a lethal blow to the current rabbinical tradition because it is no longer possible to know for sure if someone is from the line of David since the time of the temple destruction some 2,000 years ago.

“DURING THE 2000 YEARS OF EXILE
ALL THE JEWISH LINEAGES WERE MIXED.”

The Jewish people's lineage has become intermingled over the centuries, both on a national and international level. That explains the appearance of Jews with dark skin, Jews with blond hair, Middle Eastern Jews that look like other people groups from North Africa, Jews with blue eyes and European skin color, and so on. This is because during the 2000 years of exile all the Jewish lineages were mixed. But today, centuries after the destruction of the temple and all the genealogical scrolls, the Rabbis keep trying to restart the discussion by claiming that Jesus is not from David's line. See an example from Rabbi Michael Skobac who makes the following claim:

“It turns out that Yeshu(a)’s ancestry on Joseph’s side associated to King David, goes through a King with the name Jehoiachin. The problem is that in Jeremiah chapter 22 this king is being cursed by God. ‘Thus says the Lord: Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah.’ From this passage in Jeremiah we understand that every descendant of Jehoiachin is disqualified from being the Messiah and therefore Yeshu(a) is disqualified” (Rabbi Michael Skobac).

And indeed, the Rabbi is right. King Coniah, known also as Jehoiachin, was cursed. But what the Rabbi forgot to mention, or might not know himself, is that in the book Haggai, chapter 2, verse 23, Zerubbabel, Jehoiachin’s grandson, reigns over the tribe of Judah. And at the end of the chapter God tells him: “... *[I will] make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you...*” (Haggai 2:23). This means that although God cursed Jehoiachin, God later reversed the curse and his descendent, Zerubbabel, reigned once again over Judah. Another source agrees: Rabbi David Ben Yosef Kimhi’s commentary on Jehoiachin. He too states that God forgave and withdrew the curse from Jehoiachin’s lineage.

Another objection comes from Rabbi Daniel Asor. “We find that Yeshu(a)’s genealogy written in the gospels of the New Testament are mixed up. Matthew says that Yeshu(a)’s grandfather was Jakob. However, in Luke’s book it says that Eli was his grandfather”. Rabbi Asor claims that both Matthew and Luke present Yeshu(a)’s genealogy in their gospels and

that these genealogies contradict each other, since they mention totally different names.

BUT THEY ARE TWO DIFFERENT GENEALOGIES - NOT ONE.

That's right! The genealogies in Matthew and Luke are different from each other and do indeed contain different names. Matthew presents the genealogy of Jesus' father, while Luke, presents the genealogy of Jesus' mother... two different genealogies and not one.

JESUS WAS INDEED FROM THE LINE OF DAVID.

Today, we don't have the genealogical scrolls, therefore it is impossible to prove the lineage of any contenders claiming to be the Messiah since the time of the second temple. In Jesus' case, however, the scrolls were still available to be inquired of, and even the writings of his adversaries prove that he fulfilled the criteria. He was indeed from the line of David. He is the all in all, the Son of Joseph, the Son of David, the Son of God.



Chapter 16

Does The New Testament Twist The Old Testament?

“In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.”

One of the ways certain rabbis are now attacking the New Testament is by digging up problematic issues in biblical criticism from the seventeenth century. These issues have long since been resolved due to discoveries in archaeology and historical research but that doesn't seem to bother some rabbis in their quest to discredit the teachings of Jesus. A few examples of their criticisms are listed below, along with the refutations:

Rabbi Daniel Asor claims in this first example that he sees contradictions in the New Testament based on Matthew 2:23, *“And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.”* The rabbi raises the following supposed contradictions:

“Why didn't Matthew say which prophet said that? Is there a verse like this in the Books of the Prophets?... The answer is that there is no such verse in the entire Old Testament, and there is no such prophet in the history of the people of Israel.”

There is no contradiction here. Matthew doesn't quote, nor does he claim that he is quoting as evidenced by the lack of “quotation marks”. When Matthew does choose to quote from a specific book of the Old Testament, he clearly indicates it. For example:

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet...” (Matthew 1:22).

or “so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled...” (Matthew 4:14).

or “This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet...” (Matthew 12:17).

However, Matthew does write “spoken by the prophets” (Matthew 2:23) in plural and not spoken by “the prophet” as in the singular form. This is because Matthew isn’t quoting a particular verse but is referring to a central motif that was constant in the words of the prophets. When Matthew wrote “so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled that he would be called a Nazarene” he had several specific prophecies to draw from.

MATTHEW BASED HIS STATEMENTS ON DIFFERENT PASSAGES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Isaiah 11:1 , “*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.*”

Jeremiah 31:5, “*For there shall be a day when watchmen (Nazarenes) will call in the hill country of Ephraim: ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God.’*”

Isaiah 49:6, “*he says, It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved (Nazarenes) of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*”

To go even deeper, the word “netzer” in the Old Testament means “root” or “branch”. The Talmud itself refers to the Messiah in the same way, using the same name. These nicknames are a part of the same central motif that Matthew speaks about, for example:

Zechariah 3:8, “*Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.*”

Jeremiah 33:15, “*In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.*”

Matthew didn’t invent a verse claiming it was in the Old Testament, but rather he refers to a central motif of the Old Testament, using words which were common in the books of the prophets.

Rabbi Yosef Mizrachi brings another example. He claims that in Matthew 5:43, the New Testament quotes from the Pentateuch: “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy”, and that the Pentateuch never said that. But the New Testament doesn’t claim that Jesus quoted from the Pentateuch... Jesus says: “You have heard that it was said...” Jesus didn’t say “it is written in the Pentateuch, but he said “you have heard”, and then he gave two examples, one is “love your neighbor”... Jesus probably was referring here to Leviticus 19:17, which says, “love your neighbor as yourself.” The second part, “hate your enemy”, was probably a well-known saying among the people that Jesus was referring to. As many know, hating the enemy and especially hatred toward Gentiles was deeply rooted among many rabbis.

According to **Rabbi Abraham ben David, Rabbi Yehuda ben Bezalel, and Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi**, Gentiles are equal to cows and don’t deserve to be called humans.

The Ramabam writes that the Gentile is not really human, and his entire purpose is to serve the Jew; according to **Rabbi Zadik Ha’Cohen** of Lublin, all Gentiles are like cows in human form.

According to **the Zohar**, in contrast to Jews who have a living soul, the rest of the nations have no living soul.

According to **Ha’ARI**, Gentiles have neither spirit nor soul and are not even equal to a kosher cow.

It was traditions like these that Jesus spoke about when he said: “You have heard that it was said, ‘...hate your enemy.’” Jesus claimed that the

opposite is true, that we should offer love even to those who don't love us in return.

AND NOW, LETS SEE WHO *DOES* QUOTE VERSES THAT DON'T ACTUALLY EXIST.

Rabbi Daniel Asor, on page 267 in his book, quotes Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew 15:11, The Law says that you should not eat pig, but I say to you, not what goes into the mouth defiles a person." But this is not truly what is written. Compare the Rabbi's quote against what was truly written in the New Testament:

"It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person."

Rabbi Asor purposely and maliciously added words to Jesus' quote, which Jesus didn't say, including the word "pig".

In conclusion, it's not the New Testament that is inventing verses and twisting the Old Testament, but rather, someone is twisting words in a desperate attempt to try and hide Jesus from his own people.



Chapter 17

Contradictions in the New Testament?!

When a rabbi tries to attack the credibility of the New Testament, it only seems right to point out how shallow his claims are.

For many years, the rabbis in Israel have been working hard to challenge and attack the New Testament's credibility. Listed below are a few of the most famous "contradictions."

Contradiction #1:

"How can it be that in the New Testament it is written that Jacob went down to Egypt with 75 people while the Old Testament states that Jacob went to Egypt with only 70 people." (Rabbi Yossi Mizrahi)

This is what happens when they don't teach history at a yeshiva. Mizrahi quotes from the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Masoretic version is what most Jews have at home. This version was edited by the Masoretes about 1000 years ago. The Masoretic text is one out of a number of textual versions of the Old Testament. For example, haPshita, Targum Jonathan, Yerushalmi, Targum Onkelos, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, Qumran and more.

No Masoretic text existed 2000 years ago and the authors of the New Testament could not have quoted from the Masoretic text even if they wanted to. So where did they quote from? They quoted from the Septuagint. This version was edited by 70 (or 72) Jewish scholars in the second century BC. The Masoretic text in Genesis 46 reads that 70 people go down to Egypt, following Jacob. However, the Septuagint states in the same chapter that there were 75 people. The question "where did those five more people come from?" is better directed to the 72 Jewish scholars who predated the

Masoretes and not the authors of the New Testament. The question can be resolved if the 72 scholars simply decided to list Joseph's descendants as well, namely the two sons of Manasseh along with Ephraim's two sons and his grandson. Another possible explanation is that they decided to count Jacob and his four wives: Leah, Zilpah, Rachel and Bilhah.

Contradiction #2:

“There are numerous contradictions in the NT: It says that Jesus will live in Nazareth in order to fulfill what was spoke by the prophets that ‘he will be called a Nazarene.’ (Matthew 2:23). But there is no such verse in the OT” (Daat Jewish encyclopedia, published by the Herzog College for Jewish studies).

This was partially covered in the previous chapter and again there is no contradiction here, since Matthew is not quoting. He doesn't claim to be quoting. That's why he doesn't use quotation marks. Whenever Matthew does quote from a specific Old Testament book he always indicates that. Matthew wrote in chapter 2 verse 23 “spoken by the prophets”, plural and not “as the prophet spoke”, singular. This is because Matthew does not quote any verse but explains a general idea that was expressed by the prophets using familiar Hebrew wordplay where similar sounding words like “Netzer”, “Netzerim”, etc. can point to an important spiritual reality. In this case, when Matthew says “so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene (Netzer)” he is referring to several different passages in the OT: Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 31:6, Isaiah 49:6, as referenced in the previous chapter. And more: The word “Netzer” in Hebrew means “root” in the Old Testament, or “branch”. The Old Testament and even the Talmud give the Messiah the titles “root” and “branch”. To summarize this, Matthew does not make up Old Testament verses but rather sheds light on a general idea that was expressed through the prophets.

Contradiction #3:

“Quotation from the NT: ‘Jakob and his sons went down to Egypt and died there and they were taken to Shechem and buried there.’ Wrong. They

were buried in Hebron, says the Old Testament. What? Does God not remember where they buried Jacob? That guy who bluffed and wrote the New Testament was not educated. He was at the level of an absolute beginner.” (Rabbi Yossi Mizrahi)

Right, and in Genesis 50:13 it is written that Jacob alone was brought to be buried in Hebron. The place where Jacob’s sons were buried is not mentioned in the Old Testament. And the New Testament doesn’t contradict that. It seems like it’s Mizrahi’s reading comprehension that is on absolute beginners’ level here. This time, let’s see what is actually written in the NT:

“Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our ancestors died. Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb...”
(Acts 7:15-16).

The New Testament is not talking here about Jacob’s grave. Rather it mentions that “our ancestors” were brought to Shechem. The ancestors are, as a matter of fact, the sons of Jacob. From them the twelve tribes came forth. They were brought to Shechem, not Jacob. So who then is the uneducated, confused bluffer? The reader can decide.

Contradiction #4:

In the Gospel of Matthew it says: *“Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: ‘They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me’”* (Matthew 27:9-10).

Rabbi Zalman Kravitz points out a seeming contradiction here and asks: “Where does Jeremiah prophesy about 30 pieces of silver, as Matthew claims?”

Right. The book of Jeremiah contains no such verse. You will find it in the book of Zechariah, 11:13. So why does Matthew say that the verse is found in Jeremiah if it’s from the book of Zechariah? 2000 years ago the division of the Old Testament was labeled differently. And it was common practice to call a set of books by the name of one of the books it contained.

The Pentateuch (Torah) was called “Moses”. The writings were labeled as “Psalms” or “David”. The same goes for the prophetic writings. They were called “Isaiah” and “Jeremiah”. That is to say that Matthew refers to the prophets as “Jeremiah”. Mark, by the way, did the exact same thing. In the first chapter of his gospel he refers to the book of Malachi using the label “Isaiah”. In brief, “Jeremiah” and “Isaiah” served as a label for all the prophets, maybe since they are the longest prophetic books. By the way, whoever takes a look at the Tractate “Bava Batra” in the Talmud will notice that the sages followed the same custom of labeling books.

Contradiction #5:

In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 26, Judas Iscariot is bribed by the priests. He agrees to betray Jesus for 30 silver shekels. And he promises to hand Jesus over to them, giving them a sign: the one he kisses on the cheek is Jesus. This is to make sure they'd know who to arrest in the dark of the night out of all the people gathered there. Rabbi Daniel Asor is sure he found a huge discrepancy in the New Testament and writes the following: “Why would the Wise need this kiss as a sign, if Jesus was so popular and widely known, as the gospels say.” Here is one of the challenges when it comes to reading ancient texts from a modern perspective. Rabbi Asor apparently expected that Judas would take a picture of Jesus with his smartphone or at least would email Jesus’ Facebook profile photo to the priests so they could print it out and give it to the high priest’s servant who was sent by the high priest to get Jesus.

Quick reminder: no smartphones, cameras or printers 2000 years ago. Jesus’ reputation surely preceded him, but that doesn’t mean that the high priest’s servant had a poster of Jesus in his room.

Contradiction #6:

Let’s continue with Rabbi Daniel Asor. This time he says: “Where did they take the child after giving birth, to Egypt or to Jerusalem? Matthew 2:4 says, ‘So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt.’ But Luke 2:22 says ‘And when the time came for their

purification according to the Law, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.”

The simple answer: Luke describes the time when Jesus is taken to Jerusalem to redeem the firstborn and to bring a sacrifice of purification as was commanded of every woman after giving birth. Matthew describes another time, when Joseph and Mary were living in Bethlehem. Joseph was warned that Herod wanted to kill Jesus. So the couple fled to the Jewish community in Egypt.

Rabbi Asor, if someone tells you that he saw Eitan eating Cornflakes today and someone else tells you that he saw Eitan eating Schnitzel today, is that a contradiction? Or could it be that Eitan ate both Cornflakes and Schnitzel? ... Simply at different times.

Contradiction #7:

Let's keep going with Rabbi Asor as he contends with Paul: “Paul writes in his letter to the Romans: *‘Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, to bear fruit for God.’* Romans 7:4. The question here is when have the Romans been under the law? Did they get the law at Mount Sinai?”

Note what Paul the Apostle says three verses before that: “*Or do you not know, brothers, for I am speaking to those who know the law...*” (Romans 7:1). Could it be that Jews lived outside of Israel? Could it be that there were Jews in Rome? A quick search on Wikipedia reveals that indeed in the first century AD, tens of thousands of Jews lived in Rome. Some of them were members of this messianic community, and Paul is speaking to them. Rabbi Asor seems not to know this but the fact that someone is Jewish does not mean that he can't be a citizen of Moscow or Miami or London or of Rome.

Contradiction #8:

Rabbi Asor continues to educate everyone on the “contradictions” he has uncovered, and this time he really embarrassed himself. In Matthew chapter 26, the following things are described as part of the Passover meal: “*Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples...*” Rabbi Asor raises the following contention: “Did Jesus eat bread on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? It is forbidden to eat leaven on Passover.”

Rabbi Asor wonders how is it that Jesus could be eating bread at Passover. In this, the embarrassing ignorance of the Rabbi Asor is revealed. Note the opening passage of the Passover reading – in the Haggada: “This is the bread of poverty that our forefathers ate in Egypt”. Bread? In the readings for Passover? One might wonder if Rabbi Asor would claim he had found contradictions in the Haggada itself! But seriously, “bread” is a general term describing a category, a word that can be used to refer to many different types of bread; leavened and unleavened. In other words, this is like accusing Rabbi Asor of eating pork, just because it was reported that he had eaten “meat”.

Contradiction #9:

Rabbi Asor weighs in again! He writes of the same “contradictions” raised by other rabbis, but more directly to the point. This time, it concerns the most famous sermon of Jesus, called the “Sermon on the Mount”. Rabbi Asor writes: “The ‘Sermon on the Mount’. Matthew claims that Jesus’ sermon took place on a mountain. Luke, on the other hand, that it took place on a plain. Mark writes that it was preached in a boat on the sea.” So where did the “Sermon on the Mount” take place? On a mountain or in a boat?

As a matter of fact, Mark doesn’t even mention the “Sermon on the Mount”. He talks about a different sermon, a sermon in parables. Mark himself writes:

“*And he was teaching them many things in parables...*” (Mark 4:2).

Luke mentions that the sermon was on a plain. What Luke is saying is that Jesus gathered the people at a spot on the mountain that was relatively

flat, so that a bigger crowd could fit. This could have been a flat area on a mountain, such as in the Golan Heights, or mount Arena on the way to Jerusalem which have both a plateau and an outlook. This could explain it if Matthew and Luke were in fact referring to the same sermon - which may not even have been the case.

To the rabbis who attacked the New Testament we'll throw out the following challenges in return: Please settle for unenlightened humanity the list of contradictions between science and the Talmud, or the many contradictions between the Talmud and the Old Testament.

A researcher of the Old Testament and especially of the New Testament is someone who has spent years studying in an academic setting with Biblical Greek, ancient manuscripts, the history of the second Temple period, hermeneutics, semantics and more, in order to get the best perspective possible when it comes to the cultural, historical, religious and political background... in other words, searching the corresponding context of the text to understand what the writer meant. When teachers hope to follow in the footsteps of a "researcher" who has no background or knowledge in these things, they're prone to embarrass themselves with questions they don't have answers for. It's not that the answers don't exist but they simply don't have the tools to find them. A student of languages will agree, it isn't easy to learn how to read, write and speak ancient Greek. It's a shame that these things are not being taught in rabbinical yeshivas. So therefore, when a rabbi tries to attack the credibility of the New Testament, it only seems right to point out how shallow his claims are.

Dear rabbis, you want to attack the New Testament? Don't think we are not going to answer. It would be our pleasure to go through all the contradictions you claim to have found. These are not actually contradictions but desperate attempts to try and refute the New Testament, and to hide the truth about Jesus.



Chapter 18

New Testament: Bad for Jews?

In reality, it was rabbinic tradition that abandoned the Torah.

Does the New Testament tone down the law? Does it make daily living easier so that people can do whatever they please, since they'll receive forgiveness anyway? Or, in other words, does the New Testament cancel the law and give permission to sin?

Before this accusation against the New Testament versus the Torah (law) is answered, it's important to clarify: When the Rabbis use the word "Torah" they're not referring to Moses' commands but to the commands of the rabbinical tradition, invented by the Sages thousands of years after Moses' time. In the introduction to his book, "The Oral Law", famous Orthodox Jewish writer Chaim Shimmel uncovers an awkward reality: "Jews never followed the actual words of the Torah, but lived according to the Rabbis' traditions, who believe that God gave to Moses an additional law at Sinai: The Oral Law." (See chapter 47: "Is an Oral Law Truly Needed to Understand the Bible?").

Does the New Testament really make the lives of its followers easier? Which is easier? To keep outward traditions and ceremonies like wearing a piece of fabric on your head (a yarmulke) and wrapping a leather strap around your arm (tefillin), not tearing toilet paper on Sabbath - things which don't really concern our heart, our relationships or help us love our neighbor better

OR ...

the deep reaching "heart surgery" that Jesus and the New Testament call for in order to instill a living spirit in our hearts of stone? In the New

Testament, Jesus commands His followers to love even their enemies and to give their resources to the poor. Without a doubt, the New Testament doesn't make things easier. On the contrary, the standard is higher.

From God's perspective, according to the New Testament, all these habits and external ceremonies that rabbinical tradition develops and dictates don't impress Him at all. Also, they do not cause people to love or help their neighbors more. The natural inclination is to do good works and help others in order that maybe God will return the favor, or inspire others to help us when needs arise. But these motives are actually self-serving. That's not true love.

WHAT IS THE ONLY TRUE MOTIVE FOR GOOD DEEDS?

Love.

When God did the most worthy act, he displayed his love by appearing as the Messiah and giving his life even unto death, so that all who call on him could have forgiveness of sin. Therefore, it is just a natural result of following God's example that we should lend a hand, love others and help our neighbor. We do this not as someone who is under obligation, nor out of fear or constraint, but rather as an expression of love towards God according to the example that he gave us in Jesus. The truth is that in the Old Testament times, just like today, the people of Israel were so far removed from God that he said: "*Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates...*" (Isaiah 1:14). God is not interested in our ceremonies, the candles we light, the dreidels that we spin, or the meal that we skip once a year. He's interested in our heart, our relationship to our neighbors and to his creation. According to Jesus, what defiles a person is not what enters the mouth but what comes out of it. Our mouth speaks of what happens in our heart – our thoughts. For that reason, Jesus said:

"Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are

what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.” (Matthew 15:17-20).

According to Jesus, our words, just like our outward deeds, are the fruit of what occurs in our heart. For example, fornication, rape or adultery are outward expressions of the sin within our hearts; the lust in our thoughts. Therefore he taught: *“Everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart”* (Matthew 5:28).

Jesus raised the bar. Jesus’ moral understanding of the law is by far more rigid than any rabbinic interpretation. But here comes what is so special about Jesus. On one hand, Jesus reinforces and raises the moral standards of the law. Yet, on the other hand he also increases grace – a standard of grace and mercy that is hard to live up to. Not lower than the moral standard that he sets.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you” (Matthew 5:38-42).

In ancient Middle Eastern culture, and unfortunately up until today, the pride of man has brought about a vicious cycle of endless retaliation: Retaliation after retaliation after retaliation after retaliation. Jesus commanded his followers to put an end to this.

BUT HOW?

Through grace. With the commandment “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”, God taught Israel that the life of everyone has value. For example, a slave’s eye was not of less worth in God’s sight than a king’s eye. But religious tradition interpreted this in a different way, as a permission to retaliate. This leads to an endless cycle of retaliation. Bloodshed that leads to more bloodshed that leads to more bloodshed. Jesus tells us: “Enough!

Stop getting revenge.” It’s impossible to appease people with revenge. It’s impossible to cast out darkness with more darkness. Only light casts out darkness. Only love will appease people. Not revenge. How? By showing them grace. Let’s face it, this does not sound simple and easy at all. It’s a lot more challenging than kissing a mezuzah or not eating a cheeseburger, isn’t it?

BUT WAIT.

It becomes even more complex... ... because Jesus doesn’t only ask people to love those who love them too, but even those who hate them. The rabbinical tradition teaches that one should love a neighbor as himself as referring only to Jews that keep the law. Jesus, however, commands his followers to show grace and love to everyone – including Gentiles and even to those who hate them.

“You have heard it said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?” (Matthew 5:43-47).

According to Jesus, if you were angry at your brother without cause, you killed him. Did you dream about another woman? You cheated on your wife. Jesus does not make our life easier. On the contrary! He takes the Torah’s high standards, makes them even harder and proves to us that in reality, it was rabbinic tradition that abandoned the Torah and toned down its commandments. But Jesus does not want to make it harder on us in a legalistic and strict way. Rather, he wants to transform our hearts. As a result, we will love, serve and give selflessly for others. Not out of constraint or fear, but out of love, appreciation, and because we are grateful for what He did for us. Jesus is the example we need to follow. And while we should try to live up to the highest moral standard, we must remember that we are not called to judge others, but to love and show mercy. God is the ultimate judge, not us. See what Paul the Apostle says in the NT:

“Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!

How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized in Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? We were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that we too might walk in newness of life just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall also be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members present to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!” (Romans 5:20-6:15).

In other words, the New Testament rules out every permission to sin. It's important to understand also how the Sages also admitted that the law of the Messiah would be different than Moses' law.

To sum it up, since the Sinai covenant we were under Moses' commandments, but now in the new covenant, we are under the commandments of the Messiah. And our lives? They do not become easier. On the contrary, they are a challenge: But also a lot more satisfying since we are not ruled by fear or constraint but by love and grace.

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Chapter 19

The Myth of Moses' Million Eyewitnesses

"Moses did not receive the Ten Commandments from God in front of Millions.

Here is what actually happened..."

Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak states that Jesus is not the Messiah based on the following claim: "I am a rational person, so I say wait a minute, if the Lord, blessed He, gave [the covenant of the Law] to the people of Israel, witnessed by millions, and let's say that he decided to then say: I'm really fed up with you, I don't want you anymore, now I choose Jesus and whoever follows him. That is possible, right? Why would you do it the first time in such a public way but this time do it in secret, like a thief whispering to him behind the mountain? If you want to declare and announce [a new covenant], then it should be done in public, at the very least as public as it was the first time." The rabbis think this is a very strong argument. But there are a few gaping holes in this line of thinking...

Rabbi Daniel Asor, Rabbi Ezekiel Sofer and Rabbi Zamir Cohen, all join Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak in his accusation. But the fact that they think the New Covenant means God has rejected his chosen people only proves how little they know the Pentateuch. So let's get down to the bottom of Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak's words.

First of all, dear rabbis, Jesus is Jewish. If God had forsaken the people of Israel and wanted to choose a new people, then he should have chosen someone who was *not Jewish*. It's possible that Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak forgot Jesus was Jewish, since the rabbis call him "Jesus the Christian", but that doesn't alter that reality that he's Jewish! In contrast to the Rabbis' sayings, the New Testament doesn't claim that the people of Israel are no longer the chosen people. It says quite the opposite, in fact.

In Paul's letter to the community in Rome he writes: "*I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew*" (Rom. 11:1-2).

Therefore quite clearly, according to the New Testament, God did not forsake the people of Israel. In addition to that, Jesus caused thousands of Gentiles to abandon their idols and foreign gods, and to believe in the God of Israel. Many of them even had to give up their lives due to their loyalty to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... And all this, thanks to Jesus.

Secondly, it's important to clarify that true believers in Jesus heartily accept God's revelation to Moses on Mt. Sinai; in fact, the New Testament is dependent upon this revelation. The Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) is God's word – a holy book – and the New Testament is the direct continuation of the first covenant. More than that, it has to be said, one cannot understand or appreciate the New Testament to its full depth without knowing the Pentateuch and the Old Testament. But let's go back to Amnon Yitzhak's claims. He says that Moses received the Law while millions of people were watching him. But the truth is that if one reads in the book of Exodus about the Mt. Sinai event, it becomes apparent that Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak doesn't know his Bible very well.

Moses did not receive the Ten Commandments from God in front of Millions. Here is what actually happened:

"Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, 'You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.' Moses said to the people, 'Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.' The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was" (Ex. 20:18-21).

The people of Israel were afraid of God and so stayed away, at a distance. The people sent Moses up the mountain by himself. When Moses was with God, he was there alone:

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.’ So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights” (Ex. 34:27-28).

Remember this is the second time already because when Moses was on the mountain the first time the people of Israel decided that they'd rather worship a golden calf:

“When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, ‘Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him’” (Ex. 32:1).

Dear reader, has the light of God's word dispelled the darkness yet? Moses received the Ten Commandments from God all alone – not in front of millions of witnesses. From this, another important question arises – can the testimony of one man's personal revelation be accepted? After all, Amnon Yitzhak ridicules and mocks anyone whom God revealed himself to individually.

God's dealings with individuals: God revealed himself individually to Adam in the Garden of Eden. On separate occasions, God revealed himself individually to Noah and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and God made a covenant in private with faithful Abraham. Even before Mt. Sinai, God revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush, in private. After the giving of the Law, God revealed himself to King David and to the Old Testament prophets, all in private – none of them had “millions of witnesses”. Therefore, we can reason that Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak doesn't accept the words of the forefathers, of the prophets or of the kings in the Old Testament, to whom God revealed himself in private.

It's important to understand that the New Testament doesn't claim that Jesus received a new set of laws. To the contrary! Jesus affirmed everything written in the Old Testament, but refused to accept the interpretations and commandments which the rabbis had invented and added. After all, Jesus himself said: "*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them*" (Matthew 5:17).

The Messiah is the only one who obeyed the entire Law and thus fulfilled it once and for all. The special thing about the new covenant, made with the blood of Jesus, is that although it was made through the people of Israel (since Jesus is Jewish), it was meant to serve all the nations of the world. Same as the promise God made to Abraham ... in private. That was the time when God promised that from Abraham's seed the Messiah would come and be a blessing to all the nations. This is the promised destiny for the people of Israel – to be a blessing to all the nations and through Jesus the Messiah. Jesus was crucified and sacrificed for the sins of humanity, on Passover, right in front of the people of Israel.



Chapter 20

Can Prayer Replace Sacrifice?

"Shortly after they rejected the Messiah, the rabbis had to solve the problem of the non-existent Temple."

God's decree of blood sacrifice is an inescapable reality and it is a necessary requirement in order to atone for sin. It is one of the primary and most prominent principles in the Law of Moses. As written, *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life"* (Leviticus 17:11).

Somehow, this gave rise to the rooster ritual on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) among devout Orthodox Jewish people who swing a chicken over their heads as a nod to the Old Testament requirements for sacrifice. But since the destruction of the second temple, the ability to offer proper sacrifices no longer exists. Those who would truly follow the Old Testament requirements must now to look to the ultimate and once-for-all atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah.

Although Rabbi Yehuda Brandes recognizes that the Law requires a blood sacrifice, he claims the following: "As the ability to offer sacrifices ceased with the destruction of the second Temple, the Sages suggested the solution of 'we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips' (Hosea 14:2)... Prayer, as a whole, is the replacement for sacrifices" ... "We need to understand that the act of prayer by itself, is a real alternative to the values which the sacrifice represents." Rabbi Daniel Asor adds: "Prayer replaced the sacrificial system 'we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips', meaning, by sacrificing bulls at the Temple while the Temple existed. In its absence, we approach God with our lips." He added: "'we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips', meaning, instead of sin and guilt offerings; prayer, repentance and study".

Shortly after they rejected the Messiah, the rabbis had to solve the problem of the non-existent Temple. Consequently, going against the Bible, they based a whole new system of law on the last few words from this verse in Hosea 14:2, *“Take with you words and return to the LORD; say to him, “Take away all iniquity; accept what is good, and we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips.”*

First problem: The Rabbinical Jewish approach, that prayer replaces the need for sacrifices, is based primarily on this verse. But several problems come to light with this approach. The first problem is that if the rabbinic interpretation is correct and Hosea is really suggesting that one can atone for sins with prayer, then an internal contradiction becomes obvious since in the Law, God demands a blood sacrifice as atonement for sins.

A second problem is that, close to a third of the Law's commandments deal with temple worship, altar, and sacrifices. If, starting from the time of Hosea in the 8th century CE, there was no more need for sacrifices to atone for sins, one would expect the sacrifices among the people of Israel to stop at that time. But as any historian knows, the sacrifices continued up until the destruction of the second Temple, right after the coming and crucifixion of Jesus. This fact alone proves that Hosea didn't cancel the need to continue offering sacrifices.

The third and central problem is the twisted and deliberate distortion by the Masoretes of the biblical text. Until the 10th century CE, the Hebrew Old Testament didn't have all the vowels, spaces or punctuation we enjoy today. Hosea 14:2 looked a bit different in its original form.

**וְנִשְׁלָמָה כְּרִימָ שְׁפָתֵינוּ
וְנִשְׁלָמָה כְּרִי מְשָׁפְתֵינוּ**

The Masoretic Translation is the most common translation in Israel today where they decided to shift one single letter, changing the meaning of

the verse all together: “So will we render for bullocks the offering of our lips.” (JPS) This is supposed to mean that our lips, or our prayers, can replace the bulls, or the sacrifices. Now, the reader might be wondering how this verse was written in earlier Jewish sources, before the Masoretic (and JPS) text?

The Septuagint, was written only 600 years after Hosea, about 1,200 years before the Masoretic translation. An even higher level of grammatical accuracy is contained within the Septuagint because it was penned long before the time of Jesus, meaning it was closer to the original language of Hosea and wasn’t theologically influenced by the appearance of Jesus and the New Testament. The seventy Jewish scholars who translated the Septuagint understood and rendered Hosea 14:2 like this, “*For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips*”. In other words, with the ‘fruit of our lips’ – in what we say, we will give gratitude.

“... the words were spaced in a way that they meant “fruit” and not “bulls”.

Don’t miss this important point. Originally, the words were spaced in a way that they meant “fruit” and not “bulls”. But the Masoretes shifted the place of one letter and by doing so they created a completely new meaning on which they based a solution for Judaism without a Temple. The correct version “*We will offer the sacrifices of our lips*” rather than the altered version “we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips” is found not only in the Septuagint, but in other ancient sources as well, like the Dead Sea Scrolls and Jewish commentaries on the Old Testament from the 3rd century BC.

To take this point even further, for the Masoretic translation to be accepted as proper biblical Hebrew, the word “bulls”, should have been close to the words “our lips”, meaning “bulls of our lips”; ‘the sacrifices are our prayers’. But this, of course, is not what the text says, and it contradicts biblical grammar. One cannot find this term “bulls of our lips” anywhere in the Old Testament at all. “Fruit of our lips” on the other hand is more common, and is used often in biblical Hebrew. The Old Testament uses the word “fruit” over and over again, symbolically or as a synonym for “a

product of”, just like in modern Hebrew and English too. Actually, Hosea himself gives a good illustration of this just a few sentences earlier in chapter 10.

*“You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice, You have eaten the **fruit** of lies”* (Hosea 10:13 [emphasis mine]).

So, regarding the supposition that prayer is an acceptable substitute for sacrifice to take away sin? This is based on a reinterpretation of that one verse in Hosea 14:2, which has been twisted to say something that Hosea did not write.

The tradition replacing prayer with sacrifice is based on the verse in Hosea, but others may also refer to Psalm 141:2 which says: *“May my prayer be set before You like incense. May the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.”* However, remember, this was written by David - a man who followed God’s laws faithfully, wanted to build the temple, and sacrificed countless animals in accordance with God’s requirements. David was saying, “Just as our incense and sacrifices rise to you, please may my prayers rise to you.” David could prophetically see that the blood of bulls would not ultimately cleanse people from sin (Ps 40:6-8 and 51:16), but that did not stop him from making the sacrifices that God required as a covering until Jesus provided blood atonement to take away sin completely, once and for all.

It must also be said that despite the claim that sacrifices are not necessary, the fact that traditional Jewish prayers petition God for the restoration of the temple, morning, noon and night reveals the desire to return to the sacrificial system. The longing for the temple indicates that they still believe blood sacrifice is more important than they are willing to admit. This is just another way that the rabbis are hiding Jesus from you.



Chapter 21

Is it Lawful to Make Substitutions for Blood Sacrifice?

"And Moses took the blood and threw it on the altar for atonement for the People." (Exodus 24:8).

As Bible students well know, blood sacrifice remains a central theme in the Torah when it comes to the atonement for sins. But today, in attempts to argue against the need for the temple and for sacrifices (and especially the sacrifice of the Messiah) certain rabbis claim that even during the time of the Pentateuch it was possible to atone for sins without blood, but with fine flour and money. See for example the words of Rabbi Daniel Asor: "Forgiveness of sins does not necessarily depend upon blood, but on repentance and on the offering of fine flour, without any blood." Here he is referring to Leviticus 5:11. Sounds reasonable, right? Let's read what the verse actually says:

"But if he cannot afford two turtledoves or two pigeons, then he shall bring as his offering for the sin that he has committed a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it and shall put no frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering" (Lev 5:11).

CAN FLOUR DO THE TRICK?

Superficially, and if one ignores the context of this verse, the commandment does indeed allow those who couldn't afford to purchase a lamb, kid, pigeon or a turtledove, to sacrifice fine flour instead. How can it be possible that fine flour could substitute for a sin offering? The truth is that the answer is very simple, as will be seen in the following verses, verses 12 and 13 (which Rabbi Asor didn't bother to quote):

“And he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take a handful of it as its memorial portion and burn this on the altar, on the LORD’s food offerings; it is a sin offering. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin, which he has committed in any one of these things, and he shall be forgiven. And the remainder shall be for the priest, as in the grain offering.”

“... the priest ... mixed the flour with the blood of the sacrifices that was already on the altar...” According to these verses, the priest should take a handful of the flour, as a reminder, and burn it on the altar, on the Lord’s food offerings (meaning, above the fire which was burning for God). Then, the priest should make atonement for the poor man. Simply put, the priest following his role as a mediator between God and the people of Israel mixed the flour with the blood of the sacrifices that was already on the altar and could thus atone for people who couldn’t afford to buy an animal of their own. Nowhere in the Old Testament does it say that fine flour on its own had the ability to atone for sins, or that the life of the flesh is in fine flour. The poor could benefit from the atoning power of the altar, since the flour absorbed the blood from the altar and was then sacrificed. There is not even one verse in the entire Old Testament that implies that flour on its own has any sort of power to atone for sins. Rabbi Asor completely and intentionally took this verse out of its context.

WHAT ABOUT MONEY?

Rabbi Asor also quotes Exodus 30:15-16, where it says, *“The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you give the LORD’s offering to make atonement for your lives. You shall take the atonement money from the people of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may bring the people of Israel to remembrance before the LORD, so as to make atonement for your lives.”*

According to the Rabbi, this testifies that sacrifice can be substituted with money for the atonement of sin. But what does the verse really say? Does the Law allow atonement for sins with money? Rabbi Asor intentionally isolates this verse clean out of its context, and completely ignores even the Sages. The term “sin” does not appear at all in these verses

and even the Jewish scholars have already proved that these verses have nothing to do with atonement for sin, but are related to the ransom for God's protection. It's important to know that this is the only place in the entire Old Testament where the term "atonement money" appears, and the context is not about sin or forgiveness, but actually a census of the people. In Exodus 30:11 it says,

"When you take the census of the people of Israel, then each shall give a ransom for his life to the LORD when you number them, that there be no plague among them when you number them."

Readers may remember the census King David initiated on his own in 2 Samuel 24 where the census ended with a severe plague. The atonement money was intended to provide protection, and there is no connection with the forgiveness of anyone's sins. When Rashi discussed the meaning of Exodus 30:15, he said, "'To atone for your souls' so that you will not be smitten with a plague because of the census.'" In other words, the word "atone" has no connection to atonement for sin. In 'Siftei Chachamim', a rabbinical collection of Rashi's interpretations, Rashi's meaning was explained: "and not to atone for your sins, as in other atonements in the Law." Similarly, in Gur Aryeh's interpretation of Rashi, it says: "this is in regards to three different money offerings, one of them pays for the animal sacrifice, and by that clarifies that the sacrifices are the atoning ones."

Ransom money is not the same as atonement for sins. Please understand this. The atonement money on its own had nothing to do with forgiveness of sins. But, as Rashi himself argues, the money that streamed into the temple financed the work of the priests and more importantly, the purchasing of sacrifices for the people. The final destination of the money only supports this... with it they could buy sacrifices that would make the atonement for sins possible.

Like the Sages, other Jewish researchers understood this. Rabbi Hertz for example, wrote in the commentary to Exodus 30 that the term, "to atone for your souls" is an expansion on the meaning of the word "ransom". Rabbi Hertz explains it this way: "Money paid by the man who is guilty of taking the life of another, under circumstances other than murder." Jewish

Bible Scholar, Jacob Milgrom, in his interpretation to Numbers 31, wrote: “In God’s eyes, the ransom is a necessary preventative step against a plague that could attack the people due to a census.” The Rashbam, Rashi’s grandson, said the same things over 800 years ago. So even the Sages and other Jewish scholars recognize that this refers to ransom money for protection, and not to atonement for sins, as the Sages themselves testify.

But modern rabbis like Rabbi Asor prefer to twist the Word of God and the Law, attempting to confuse you, so that you will not recognize your need for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. The next chapter “Is Blood Necessary for Atonement of Sins” should serve as a closing argument for now. The sacrifice of the Messiah cannot be measured with money or flour; the blood of the Messiah is extremely costly, but the good news is that it’s given to us for free, and thanks to this truth, we can enjoy forgiveness and atonement for our sins.



Chapter 22

Is Blood Necessary for Atonement of Sins?

The motif of the blood is so strong, so central, and so important in the Pentateuch that it's impossible to separate it from the motif of sacrifice and atonement for sins, which are interrelated.

The Pentateuch teaches that when someone sins, they must be put to death, or that someone or something else needs to take their place and die in their stead. But now, with no Temple, no sacrifices and no priests, more and more of the modern rabbis are refusing to recognize the importance and centrality of blood for the atonement and forgiveness of sins. The radicals among them exaggerate and take it even farther. Consider the sayings of Rabbi Daniel Asor for example: “Christianity’s obsession on the subject of ‘atonement for sins’ through someone else’s pure blood, comes from the Pagan idolatry of ancient religions.” Rabbi Asor found a creative way to avoid dealing with God’s demand in the Pentateuch for a blood sacrifice as atonement for sins, by claiming that this is paganism and idolatry. If this is true, why did God demand it from the people of Israel in such a clear way?

BLOOD ATONEMENT IN THE BIBLE.

Since the beginning, in Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve sinned against God and just before God banished them from the Garden of Eden, He showed them for the very first time, the principle of blood atonement on which the entire Pentateuch will be based. God kills an animal and from its skin He makes Adam and Eve leather garments, as it is written: “*And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them*” (Gen. 3:21). This is the first time that death appears in the scriptures.

Adam and Eve for the first time in their lives are exposed to death, to blood that was shed as a result of sin they committed against God.

Much later, on the night before the Exodus from Egypt, it was the blood of an innocent Passover lamb that was smeared on the doorposts and lintels serving as a sign for the angel of death. As it is written in Exodus 12:13, *“The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.”*

Later still: Exodus 24, when God made the covenant with Israel on Mt. Sinai, the People of Israel went through purification by blood. God’s covenant with the People was made with blood: *“And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.’ And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, ‘Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words’”* (Ex. 24:6-8).

The Onkelos translation, the most important translation of the Pentateuch to Aramaic, used in the synagogues during the first centuries after Jesus, included the word “atonement” in Exodus 24:8: *“And Moses took the blood and threw it on the altar for atonement for the People.”*

In Exodus 30, the Day of Atonement is mentioned for the very first time in the Pentateuch: *“Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year. With the blood of the sin offering of atonement he shall make atonement for it once in the year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD”* (Ex. 30:10).

Did you notice? This verse, which mentions the Day of Atonement for the first time, doesn’t mention anything in regards to prayer, good deeds, fasting or charity. There is no doubt that these things are important, but the Pentateuch only speaks about blood. Why? Because atonement ceremonies are strongly linked to blood. If the blood is taken away, there is no sacrifice, no atonement, no forgiveness of sins.

JEWISH SAGES ACKNOWLEDGED THE IMPORTANCE OF BLOOD FOR ATONEMENT.

In Leviticus 16, God explains to Moses how the sins of the People of Israel will be forgiven, by taking the blood which was offered at the altar, and sprinkling it on the Mercy Seat as atonement for the iniquities and sins of the People of Israel. Even the Sages recognized this.

Yalkut Shimoni says on Exodus 29: “There is no atonement but in the blood.”

In tractate **Yoma 5a** it says: “And he shall lay his hand... and it shall be accepted for him. Does the laying on of the hand make atonement for one? Does not atonement come through the blood?”

Rashi himself said: “There is no atonement without blood.”

The Sages also recognized this principle and repeated it in **Zevachim 6; Minchot 93; Sifra 4**, and more. And yet, Rabbi Asor calls it paganism and idolatry when God defines blood sacrifice in the Pentateuch as the only way to receive atonement and forgiveness over sins.

WHY IS BLOOD SACRIFICE ESSENTIAL?

The Book of Leviticus, the book which is dedicated in detail to the sacrifices and atonement for sins, talks about atonement 49 times! Each time, the context is always the blood sacrifices. Why is blood so important to God? In Leviticus 17:10, God commands not to eat blood, and in the next verse, He explains why the blood is so important: *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life”* (Lev. 17:11 [emphasis mine]).

Once again, according to Leviticus 5, even the poor who had no money to buy an animal needed to bring fine flour to the high priest... And what did the high priest do with it? He'd mix it with the blood on the altar so it

had absorbed the blood, and then he'd sacrifice it. So what if a rabbi claims that blood sacrifice is one way to receive forgiveness of sins, but not the only way? Quoting again the words of Rabbi Asor: "There are various methods to obtain forgiveness of sins, like repentance, prayer and charity... Sacrifice offerings is the less preferred way." Rabbi Asor contradicts himself, as he claimed at first that this is a pagan idolatry custom, but now, he is compromising by saying that it *is* possible to obtain forgiveness of sins through the offering of a sacrifice... but that God is not really interested in that. The answer to this is simple - Asor gives a modern excuse, specifically fabricated to hide the need for Jesus from his own people. Jesus is the Messiah whose blood was shed as a sacrifice to free us from our sins.

The Jewish researcher, Professor Geza Vermes wrote: "According to Jewish theology, there can be no expiation without the shedding of blood."

Also Professor Bruch Levin, in his commentary on Leviticus wrote: "Expiation by means of sacrificial blood-rites is a prerequisite for securing God's forgiveness. As the rabbis expressed it, there is no ritual expiation except by means of blood."

To conclude, Rabbi Asor and those like him would rather contradict the Sages and even the Law of Moses than deal with God's requirement of blood for forgiveness of sins, and with the fact that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is the one who provided for this need. Jesus is not only the priest who supplied the sacrifice for us, but he himself is the High Priest, who shed his own blood to pay for our sins, once and for all.



Chapter 23

The Plague of Original Sin

Original Sin is not a foreign Christian invention, but appears in ancient Jewish thought.

When God created mankind, he gave them freedom. Freedom is a good thing, but if human beings are meant to be free, it is impossible to force them to obey God. Adam and Eve were the first human beings who were given this enormous power of free will, and they took advantage of it; they rebelled against God's command in the Garden of Eden and the tragic consequences of their choice affected us all. This is what is known as "Original Sin", which is thought to be a very Christian concept, and not Jewish. But is that really true?

The bad choices that people make have darkened the world and have affected all of humanity in many ways and forms. This is not just a case of Christian interpretation. See the words of Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu who wrote: "The Original Sin, meaning the sin of the first man in the Garden of Eden, is the root of all sins."

Just like a plague passes from one person to another, and at times affects hundreds of millions of people, so the Original Sin which was committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden affects and infects all mankind. Sin is the most deadly and widespread plague ever, and it corrupts the hearts of all people, all over the world, at all times, and with no exceptions. Even back in the Garden of Eden, after the first sin but before Adam and Eve were banished, God promised that the solution to the plague of sin would come from the seed of a woman. The Old Testament prophets, Moses and all of the Bible's heroes waited in anticipation for the time of one who was called "The Messiah". In agreement with the prophets, the Sages rightly declared that: "all the prophets which have spoken have foretold the days of the Messiah" (Babylonian Talmud, San. 99, 71). This Messiah must

have a different kind of human nature from other human beings: a godly nature, which the plague of sin cannot affect. And indeed, as was explained earlier regarding the virgin birth of the Messiah, even the Sages interpreted that the Messiah would be miraculously born without a biological father.

The problem is that “Original Sin”, “a Messiah with a godly nature”, and “a Messiah without a biological father”, is all starting to sound too “Christian” for certain contemporary rabbis who decided, not for the first time, to contradict the Old Testament and the ancient Jewish Sages. See for example Rabbi G. Sigal, who is known for his objection to Messianics and who strongly claims: “Jews do not believe in the doctrine of the Original Sin!” Is this true? The Sages had very deep faith in this. It is the modern rabbis who will do everything they can to hide Jesus from you, and argue against it. The New Testament undeniably validates many sections of the Old Testament regarding Original Sin but then so do the old Sages. Consider the following:

THE SAGES WRITE ABOUT THE ORIGINAL SIN OF ADAM AND EVE.

“**Yalkut Shimoni**” raises an interesting rabbinic discussion regarding the question: “When does evil nature enter a man – at the time of birth, or at the time of creation?” The Sages ask whether evil nature controls people from the time the fetus is created, or only from the time the baby comes out into the world. Either way, they are accepting humanity’s innate sinful nature.

Midrash Deuteronomy Rabbah also proves beyond any doubt that the Sages understood that sin is inherited: “Moses said, ‘LORD of the World, there are thirty-six decrees, that if a man breaks one of them he must be put to death. I did not break any of them, why do you sentence me to death? He said to me: ‘In the sin of the first man you die, as he brought death unto the world.’” According to this Midrash, Moses complains that he was sentenced to death. When he asks to know what sin he committed that he should suffer death for, God answers that because of the sin of the first man, he will die.

In **Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 131:1**, in the halacha instructions for Yom Kippur Eve (Day of Atonement): “It is customary to carry out the ‘Kapparot’ (sacrifices) in the pre-dawn hours of the day before Yom Kippur, as then (the attribute of) mercy is greatest. One takes a non-castrated rooster for a man, and a hen for a woman. For a pregnant woman (both) a rooster and a hen.” It says here that a pregnant woman must have two chickens for ‘kaparot’, one for her and one for the baby in her womb. Just like a pregnant woman with AIDS passes the virus to her baby, so sin passes through the human genome, from the woman to her fetus.

To conclude, this is not a foreign Christian invention, but rather it is ancient Jewish thought recognizing the need for atonement and sacrifice for the Original Sin, which lives in everyone. Denying the wisdom of these particular Sages is yet another example of how modern rabbis have taken away the key to knowledge and the one they are trying to hide from you, Jesus, is the solution to the Original Sin.



Chapter 24

Where was God during the Holocaust?

"Even in suffering and death, there is a meaning to life."

Where was God during the Holocaust? Why was he silent? It's not always an easy matter to deal with these kinds of questions, since the overriding issue goes beyond this one isolated case where a race or nation fights against another one. This is about human nature which spans across all peoples and all times. Over the past century alone hundreds of millions of people were killed. Evil has its roots in our thoughts, decisions and deeds. God did not choose the evil in this world, mankind did. But no doubt, the Holocaust is the pinnacle of man's evil. And what hurts even more is the fact that it happened to us, the Jewish people, God's chosen people.

God gave mankind a free will. And with it comes an enormous responsibility since our decisions create outcomes and far-reaching implications. Just look around. Everything is based on someone's decisions, from little conflicts to cruel experiments on people and the complete decay of human behavior. The Holocaust is a horrendous but perfect example of how bad and radical the human heart can become when man acts as if he is God.

For several thousand years, the Jewish people have been suffering, persecuted and attacked by cruel nations. The difference in this case is that during the Holocaust, the existing technology documented these cruelties. And the lesson we need to learn is that it doesn't matter how well developed a human society is, how bureaucratic, how enlightened or educated the culture is, none of this will keep the human heart in check. In each generation the Jewish race has been on the verge of being destroyed, but God sees everything and remembers everything.

WHERE WAS GOD? **He was in the Holocaust.**

When each one of the six million Jewish people carried the pain of his own and his family's tragedy **God experienced everyone's pain together with them**. Just like a father that feels the pain of his child, the Creator feels the pain of his creation. And while God will reward the righteous among the nations, he will also judge the evil within the nations because of all the crimes committed against His chosen people.

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. And I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little, they furthered the disaster” (Zechariah 1:14-15).

“For thus said the Lord of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye. Behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall become plunder for those who served them. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me” (Zechariah 2:8-9).

God does not make our choices. We are not robots. But he does use the choices that people make - including the bad ones - in order to bring about good things. God even used the slaughter carried out by anti-Semites to give his people their homeland, and hope for the future. Not because of any holiness or perfection within the Jewish people, but because God is faithful to the promises that he made 2600 years ago.

“And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord... I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land” (Ezekiel 36:23-24).

Even in suffering and death, there is a meaning to life. The Holocaust survivor, Dr. Frankl, a Jewish Psychiatrist, writes the following

in his book “Man’s Search for Meaning”:

“If there is meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering. Suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death. Without suffering and death human life cannot be complete. The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross gives him ample opportunity, even under the most difficult circumstance, to add a deeper meaning to his life... Do not think that these considerations are unworldly and too far removed from real life. It is true that only a few people are capable of reaching such high moral standards.”

The meaning of life is to sacrifice for others out of love: To give of yourself for others, even if it entails suffering and maybe even death. Just like parents who are ready to give up everything for their kids. It is no coincidence that in Hebrew the word “patience” comes from “suffering”.

Also in death, there is meaning. Some give their lives to save others. We all know and can recall heroes of the past who sacrificed their lives for others. Memorial Day for fallen Israeli soldiers is a perfect example of remembering such heroes. The Jewish people were like a lamb led to the slaughter, but because of this suffering and death that we remember on Memorial Day, we can celebrate life on Israel’s Independence Day in the land of our forefathers.



Chapter 25

Inquisition, Crusades & Pogroms ... In the Name of Jesus?

This is the meaning of taking God's name in vain.

Crusades, pogroms, the Inquisition, blood libels, the Holocaust, the expulsion from Spain, exiles, anti-Semitic conspiracies... There have been so many atrocities carried out against the Jewish people, all apparently by "Christians", acting in the name of Jesus. How can this be explained? The simple answer is that there is no connection between Jesus and these horrible deeds. Rather, these evil deeds were carried out by bad people who used God's name in vain and never really knew Jesus at all.

Recently, the media exposed dozens of embarrassing cases in which rabbis were proven guilty of rape, embezzlement, stealing, cheating, abuse and incitement. Newspapers broke stories about a senior member of the Breslov Hasidim, Rabbi Berland, who molested women and children, rabbis in Bnei Brak who fed feces to little children, Rabbi Elior Chen, who burnt children's body parts, and the head of a famous Yeshiva, Rabbi Ze'ev Koplovich, who sexually harassed his students. There have been countless other cases, including rabbis who have publicly called for outspoken messianics like us to be murdered for our faith. But does it make sense to say that Abraham or Moses taught them, encouraged them, or sent them to do these things?

The same principle applies when it comes to Jesus. Jesus never encouraged any of the horrible acts committed against the Jewish people, seemingly in his name, but these anti-Semitic acts actually stand in stark contrast to what Jesus and his disciples taught in the New Testament.

ILLITERACY AND IGNORANCE

IN AGES PAST.

Bear in mind that until recently there was no internet or even book publishers. Bible translation and the printing press were relatively recent developments within the past few hundred years. Common people, even if they could read and write, did not have access to the Holy Scriptures in their own language. The average Christians did not have a Bible they could read for themselves, so, like those following Rabbinic Law, they had to blindly follow what their religious leaders told them. Unfortunately, in some streams of Christianity, mainly in Eastern Europe, many of the religious leaders were anti-Semitic and promoted hideous acts against the Jewish people. They took advantage of God's name and used it in vain, fostering the hatred that was in their heart. Their teaching was not based on the New Testament but rather, just like today's rabbinical Judaism, on human tradition.

It cannot be denied that a lot of Jewish blood has been shed in the name of Jesus by violent and evil Christians who used his name as an excuse for their wickedness. But it wasn't the New Testament that brought all these shameful acts on the Jewish people. Truth be told, Jesus himself made predictions about bad people like this in the presence of his Jewish disciples: "*They will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake*" (Matthew 24:9).

WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACH?

Jesus taught about love, mercy and compassion towards everybody. For example: regarding those who persecute the disciples for their faith, Jesus taught: "*But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also... and I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 5:39, 44-45).

Jesus' disciples continued to teach the same things. Paul wrote to the Roman believers: "*Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live*

peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:17-19, 21).

To the Galatians, he wrote: *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:22-26).*

To the Corinthian he writes: *"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends..." (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a).*

The apostle John wrote: *"Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:9-11).*

"Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers" (1 John 3:14-16).

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love" (1 John 4:7-8).

The teachings of Jesus and that of his disciples, were not merely words and theories. They actually practiced what they preached. As Jews, Jesus and his disciples gave up their lives for their people. They were crucified and stoned, burnt alive and beheaded, all because they cared about the good news they were proclaiming even more than their own lives.

GOD REDEEMS EVIL ACTS FOR HIS PURPOSES

Just as Joseph's brothers committed evil against him by selling him as a slave, so God can use human wickedness to bring about his own purposes, to discipline his people and to shape history. Joseph tells his brothers, "*You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.*" (Genesis 50:20) Did God want Joseph's brothers to do evil? No. But he gave them free choice to act wickedly, and then powerfully redeemed their wrong actions to bring about his own purposes for the ultimate good of everyone. In a similar way, whenever God's Chosen People did not walk in the ways of the Lord and did not obey the prophets, God used other nations (like Assyria for example) to punish them. He punished the Gentile nations afterwards as well but he used their wickedness against Israel for his purposes.

In the Bible, in Deuteronomy 28, God lays out before his people the blessings and the curses: blessings and protection if they walk in his ways but curses and punishment if they don't.

And the Lord said to Moses, "*Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done...*" (Deuteronomy 31:16-18).

Since the people of Israel broke the law, God allowed the nations around Israel to punish them, to the extent that the people wondered:

WHERE DID GOD GO?

God purposely hid his face from Israel because they did not follow him. Amos the prophet said: “*You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities*” (Amos 3:2).

Moses said: “*The Lord saw it and spurned them, because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters. And he said, 'I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness. They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol...*” (Deuteronomy 32:19-22).

If the Chosen People are accountable before God, is it not right they should be educated by God? The question that should run through every Jews' head now is, “If Jesus really was the Messiah we rejected, what are the consequences of us rejecting him - blessings or curses?” Should it surprise anyone that God will turn his face from those who reject him? When Jesus was crucified some of the people shouted: “*His blood be on us and on our children.*” They might have shouted this in the heat of the moment without understanding what they were saying. But it stands that only the rejection of the Messiah could bring on the Jewish people thousands of years of pain and agony to this extent. This is not to excuse the evil perpetrated against the Jewish people by so-called Christians, any more than the evil done by Joseph's brothers can be excused. Everyone who took part in the violence of the Crusades, the Inquisition and the Holocaust will be held accountable before God. But God has his purposes, and will ultimately redeem all things for the good of Israel and for the whole world.

Just as Joseph was sold to the Gentiles and endured suffering which was used by God to save many, so the suffering and death of Jesus brought salvation and life to whoever calls on his name. The fact that Jesus, as a Jew, was sold over to the Gentiles who inflicted such torture and cruel death means that he is a Messiah that the persecuted Jewish people can identify with - both as an individual and as a nation.

2,000 years ago, when he entered Jerusalem for the last time in his earthly life and before he was crucified, Jesus cried out and proclaimed: *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen that gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’”* (Matthew 23:37-39).

One more thought: While there were Christians that gave Jesus a bad name, there are also millions of Christians who really love Israel, the “righteous among the nations”. They love our people, support Israel financially and pray for all of us. Without their initiative and generosity we might not even have our own state today.



Chapter 26

Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic?

“Should the New Testament be burned?”

The Jewish website “Kipa” offers an answer to the question, “Should the New Testament be burned?” Rabbi Karim answers in the affirmative, and claims that not only should the New Testament be burned, but he also encourages the burning of any book which contradicts rabbinic tradition. A few years ago, religious Jewish Deputy Mayor of Or-Yehuda, Israel, as well as Uzi Aharon, together with hundreds of kids from the city’s Orthodox Jewish school, publicly burned hundreds of New Testaments. Maybe someone needs to remind the rabbis of the famous saying by Heinrich Heine: “Where they have burned books, they will end up burning human beings.”

Rabbi Daniel Asor explains their reason for hating the New Testament as follows: “The New Testament is an anti-Semitic book, with plots against the Jews.” So, is the New Testament truly anti-Semitic? Was Jesus an anti-Semite?

What does the “good book” say?

“Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness.”

“Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in

their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace.”

“Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates. All her idols I will lay waste, for from the fee of a prostitute she gathered them, and to the fee of a prostitute they shall return.”

“The Lord was very angry with your fathers... ‘Do not be like your fathers. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword.’”

Sounds pretty anti-Semitic, doesn’t it? But what if you were told that these are not quotes from the New Testament, but from the Hebrew Scriptures? Truly! These are verses from the mouths of the Jewish prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Elijah, and others in the Hebrew Scriptures. So, are the biblical prophets also “anti-Semites” for criticizing the religious leaders of Israel? Of course not. In the same way, it’s impossible to claim that Jesus, a Jewish prophet who criticized the religious leaders in Israel, was an anti-Semite.

The corrupt rabbis of Jesus’ era did not appreciate hearing the truth, and therefore rejected and incited the people against Jesus. They did not want to lose their power and control over the people. Jesus rebuked the rabbis of His time, because they crushed the commoners and profited at their expense. He challenged the religious compulsion, the corrupt priesthood, and the terrible things the religious leaders in Israel did in the name of God.

SOUNDS VERY
FAMILIAR, RIGHT?

Jesus loved His people Israel and the Hebrew Scriptures from which He quoted repeatedly. He preached against the rabbis, the Pharisees of His time, because He recognized them as hypocritical leaders, the kind who tell others to do what they themselves did not do. He called the Hebrew Scriptures “The Word of God.” He believed in the Hebrew Scriptures, relied on them, and referred everyone to the Hebrew Scriptures. Every miracle Jesus performed was done in the name of the God of Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob. He never denied His Jewish identity, nor aspired to establish a new religion. But the religious leaders of Jesus' time rejected, humiliated and incited against those Jews who, like a growing number of Jews today, chose to follow Jesus as Messiah. They threw Jesus' followers out of the synagogues and blamed them for every bad thing that happened.

At the same time, the nations of the world received Jesus with open arms, in perfect accordance with God's promise to Abraham that the Messiah would be a blessing to all nations. The numbers of those who accepted Jesus as Messiah, mainly Gentiles, rapidly increased. These followers were given the nickname "Nazarenes" after the city of Nazareth where Jesus grew up. They also were called "Messianic," meaning "people who belong to the Messiah." ("Christ" is from the Greek for Messiah, they were called "Christians": those of the Messiah, the Christ.)

IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND AND REMEMBER TWO THINGS:

First: The New Testament writers were Israeli Jews themselves.

Anti-Semitism did not come from the New Testament, but about 300 years after, from the Roman Emperor Constantine and his influence on the developing movement. Constantine turned it into the official religion of the Roman Empire, imposed it on the people, and cut off all its Jewish roots. They started teaching a new idea: that God had finished with Israel and had replaced them with the Church. With time, it grew bigger and stronger and to our sorrow, throughout many parts of history, it grew more anti-Semitic.

Second: The New Testament itself teaches the complete opposite of anti-Semitism! Here are the words of the Apostle Paul from the New Testament to the believers in Rome:

"I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew."

And in another place, he wrote:

“I speak the truth in Christ; I am not lying, as confirmed by my conscience in the Holy Spirit. that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Messiah, who is God over all, blessed forever.”

A Jewish person who checks for him or herself will find that Jesus and the New Testament are not anti-Semitic, but in fact the opposite is true! Jesus and His apostles loved the people to whom they belonged, the People of Israel. So much so, they did not agree to stand by in silence against the religious coercion and corruption which came to a climax with the rejection of our Messiah.

And what about you? Are you going to continue blindly following the rabbinic tradition of rejecting our Messiah?



Chapter 27

Was Jesus an Anti-Semite?

Jesus was a Jew who stood up for the people of Israel against corrupt leaders.

Jesus was an anti-Semite who preached against the Old Testament and founded a new religion... These are typical claims uttered by those who oppose the messianic faith and Jesus.

In his book, Rabbi Asor repeats the claim several times – that Jesus and his disciples were anti-Semites. But what about the rebukes and angry prophecies by the Old Testament Prophets? Were they anti-Semites too? And what about a Jewish-Israeli reporter who criticizes Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and Rabbi Rentgen? Is he being anti-Semitic? Or is anyone who disagrees with the rabbis automatically labeled “anti-Semitic”? It’s a convenient way to deal with people you want to silence, isn’t it? To accuse anyone who disagrees with you of being “anti-Semitic”. But Jesus was a Jew from the tribe of Judah, not some anti-Semitic Gentile.

Just like the Biblical prophets of old, Jesus criticized the religious leaders of his people, which is the exact reason that they call him an anti-Semite. The Messiah, more than any prophet before him, has the right to challenge the people of Israel and their leaders about their sins. Jesus’ opinion of the Law is clear to anyone who will bother to read the New Testament.

**JESUS BELIEVED THE OLD TESTAMENT
TO BE NOTHING LESS THAN THE WORD OF GOD.**

Jesus said about the Law: “*Scripture cannot be broken*” (John 10:35). He called the Old Testament “God’s Commandment” and “The Word of God”, and was angry with the Pharisees and Scribes, the rabbis of his time, for breaking God’s laws with their traditions that they invented and forced

on the people. He said about the Law: “*not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished*” (Matthew 15:18).

Jesus consistently based his teachings on the Old Testament, whenever he spoke with his disciples or with others. “*Have you not read what was said to you by God?*” (Matthew 22:31).

Jesus never claimed that the Old Testament is no longer valid. The gospels (especially Mark) open with an emphasis on Messiah - the same theme that closed out the Old Testament in Malachi. As messianic Jews, we see the New Testament as a Jewish book which is a direct continuation of the Old Testament - not a substitute for it.

SO WHY DO SOME RABBIS STILL CLAIM THAT JESUS WAS ANTI-SEMITIC?

Several reasons: First of all, Jesus preached against the rabbis, because he saw them to be hypocritical rulers, who made others do things they didn't even do themselves. **He preached against the “Oral Law” and the commandments: the traditions they themselves invented.**

For example:

“*Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” ... And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.”*” (Matthew 15).

The rabbis didn't like the fact that **Jesus was jeopardizing their authority over the people** so they turned against him and against his teachings. **They were afraid to lose their seats of honor in the Sanhedrin**, and that the people would stop admiring them and kissing their hands. Therefore, they preferred to reject Jesus and to turn the people against him, exactly as they still do today.

Jesus reminds us how ‘religion’ develops: it is based on human traditions. Jesus didn’t disrespect God’s Law. He didn’t do anything, say anything or teach anything against the Law in the Bible, but he completely rejected the man-made traditions which the rabbis of his day revered. This kind of tradition produces religion, and religion takes us away from God, and towards laws made by religious leaders – the “dos” and the “don’ts”. Presently, religious Jews know the rabbinic traditions in the Talmud better than they know the Bible, and even worse, they don’t know how to differentiate between the two! Throughout history, the traditions grew and increased at the expense of God’s commandments, which have been violated again and again. And it is not only the Jewish tradition that is based on rules and fear – any religious system is much the same; Muslims and Catholics also follow a religion based on rules and traditions, and enforced by fear. This is exactly what Jesus came to fight against!

Take for example the way people pray in the synagogue, every day of the year, reading predefined prayers. Every time we go to pray with other people, it’s hard to avoid the feeling that we’re in some sort of speed-reading competition rather than communicating with God, and it can be quite frustrating and distracting trying to keep up with everyone else!

Jesus, who was angry with the rabbis of his day, quoted the rebuke given by the prophet Isaiah hundreds of years earlier:

“Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men” (Isaiah 29:13).

Isaiah warned that while the people may honor God with words, their hearts were far from Him. Jesus is showing us something that religion made us forget... that God sees the heart; He is not impressed by all the movements we make when we read from one prayer book or another, or by how fast we manage to mumble the prayers. According to Jesus’ observation, the hearts of the religious people of his day were far from God. What they were interested in were man-made traditions and commandments, and misleading argumentations that had taken the place of

a real relationship with God. This was a problem in the days of the prophets, the days of Jesus, and it is still a problem today.

Far from being an anti-Semite, it is precisely because Jesus loves the people of Israel, and all peoples, that he wanted to highlight the dangers of letting our hearts drift far away from God by getting sucked into man-made religion.



Chapter 28

Jesus in the Talmud

The Talmud accepts that Jesus did miracles. But how?

At a time when most of humanity believed in the existence of many different gods and idols, the God of Israel stated: “*I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me*” (Exodus 20:2-3).

Two common prejudices are shared among those who oppose followers of Jesus: The first is that Messianics have taken a man and turned him into a god. The second is that Jesus bewitched, incited and turned the people of Israel away from the God of Israel and towards idol worship. The rabbis see Jesus as a false Messiah. Rabbi Joseph Mizrachi for example, agrees that Jesus performed miracles but claims that they are no indication that he is the Messiah. Rabbi Daniel Asor claims: “Jesus was indeed a false prophet as he acted only by using powers of sorcery.” He also claims that Jesus “was himself the embodiment of Satanism.”

DID JESUS USE MAGIC AND SORCERY AS THE TALMUD CLAIMS?

Claims like those of Rabbi Asor are based on a myth of the Sages that Jesus learned the arts of sorcery in Egypt, which has no literary or historical support outside the pages of the Talmud. **According to the Talmud, Tractate Sotah, 47a, Jesus was allegedly a disciple of Rabbi Joshua Ben Perachiah.** In this fable, Jesus had an altercation with the rabbi and, in revenge, decided to learn witchcraft in Egypt to lead the people of Israel into sin. The problem with this bizarre legend is that there’s as much evidence and historical credibility for it as there is for the story of Santa Claus handing out gifts by sliding down chimneys on Christmas Eve. First

of all, the claim has no support outside of Talmudic writings and secondly, it was written hundreds of years after the time of Jesus, with the obvious aim of discrediting him and rationalizing away his supernatural abilities. It is similar to all of a sudden coming up with the claim that Van Gogh's masterpieces were painted by the powers of a demon that possessed him.

But here is the most embarrassing part of this ridiculous story: **Joshua Ben Perachiah lived in the second century BC, hundreds of years before Jesus was even born, so how could Jesus possibly have been his disciple??** It's the same as being told that Benjamin Ze'ev Herzl, who lived in the 19th century, was the disciple of Rabbi Joseph Karo, who lived in the 16th century.

IN SHORT: EMBARRASSING.
BUT AT LEAST THEY ADMIT HE DID MIRACLES.

The Sages agreed that Jesus performed miracles, but just tried to cast doubt on the power he was using. How interesting that Jewish Sages - including the rabbis today - don't even attempt to deny that Jesus and his followers did indeed perform supernatural miracles. An example of this can be found in the **Talmud, Tractate Abodah Zarah 17a**, where a conversation takes place between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva about a disciple of Jesus, a Messianic Jew named Jacob, who was renowned for his ability to heal people in Jesus' name. Later on in the same **Tractate, 27b**, Rabbi Ishmael's nephew was bitten by a snake and Jacob, that same disciple of Jesus, offered to heal him in the name of Jesus. However, even though he acknowledged the disciple's ability to heal people in Jesus' name, the Rabbi refused saying he would rather that his sister's son should DIE instead!

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM
THE MIRACLES OF JESUS?

“Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them” (Luke 7:22).

The miracles that Jesus and his disciples performed for all to see attested to a wide range of things over which Jesus had authority. He had authority over the forces of nature, over diseases, over demons, over creation and even over death. Unlike false prophets, who performed wonders in the name of idols, Jesus always acted in the name of the God of Israel alone. Every miracle performed by Him was in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Expectations among the Jews of the third century BC were that when the Messiah comes, he alone would be able to perform what are known as:

“The Four Miracles of the Messiah”:

1. Healing a leper,
2. Healing a man born blind,
3. Casting out a mute demon
4. Raising a man who has been considered dead for at least four days.

This is verified in the Qumran Scrolls (4Q521) which were written well before the time of Jesus. The Jewish Essenes who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls related these four miracles to the Messiah. And indeed in the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah foretold in chapter 35 that the Messiah would succeed in opening the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf and that he would cause the mute to speak.

Since the completion of the Pentateuch and until the time of Jesus, not one historical document or any single shred of evidence tells of a time when the priests had to implement the Levitical instructions about how to deal with a cured leper. Miriam the prophetess, sister of Moses, was healed before the Torah was given, and Naaman the Syrian wasn't an Israelite. The very first time that the priests ever had to apply those laws in Leviticus 13 was when Jesus showed up, 1500 years later. Not only did Jesus heal dozens of lepers, but he even said to one of them: *“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them”* (Matthew 8:4). Jesus was aware that the priests would know that leper, and that once they had seen him cleansed and healed, they would know that the Messiah was truly among them. The problem is that, as is well attested and

recorded in the Talmud itself, the priests at the time were evil and corrupt. They were the kind of people who were only interested in power and control.

Jesus could not have used satanic witchcraft to heal, because God would not have allowed anyone to do that which is reserved for the Messiah alone. More importantly, Jesus performed all of the miracles in the name of the God of Israel - he never claimed to heal by the power of Satan. On the contrary, he claimed to heal by the power of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, thereby directing both Jews and Gentiles towards God. Nevertheless, the religious leaders accused Him of being a satanic sorcerer: "*It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons...*" (Matthew 12:24). Jesus pointed out the fallacy in their claim by answering them wisely: "*Knowing their thoughts, He said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?"*" (Matthew 12:25-26).

THE TALMUD CONTRADICTS ITSELF ON THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

Not only would God not allow Jesus to perform miracles in his name if sorcery was involved, but also the very rabbinical claim against Jesus is an internal contradiction in itself. Why? Because at least three of the miracles performed by Jesus involved water: Walking on water, turning water into wine and in the healing of a blind man as recorded in John 9. In the **Talmud, Sanhedrin 47b and Berachot 9b**, Jewish sages teach that sorcery is undone when brought into contact with water. This means that the rabbinic Talmud shot itself in the foot. Without even noticing, the Sages admitted that Jesus couldn't have possibly been a sorcerer.

In addition, take a look at the results of Jesus's miracles: If Jesus tried to perform sorcery in Satan's name and turn people away from YAHWEH and to idol worship, then He performed poorly and did a miserable job, as he only brought people closer to the God of Israel. The miracles that Jesus performed in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob only made

both Jews and Gentiles to abandon their idols and believe in the God of Israel!

Jesus performed those miracles because he was the Messiah. And to this day, people around the world are supernaturally healed in the name of Jesus – the Jewish Messiah who was sadly rejected by his own people.

Consider the words of Daniel Zion, the Chief Rabbi of Bulgaria during World War II who came to believe in Jesus:

“If you Rabbis would pray to God with your whole heart and read the New Testament thoughtfully, approaching this book and the Messiah with reverence, I am convinced that God would open your eyes. Jesus did nothing but good, he called Israel to repentance and to the Kingdom of God. He did many signs and wonders, as no prophet before him. He wished to unite people; that they should love each other and also their enemies. Thus he wished to build a bridge between Israel and the nations: [that] there should be peace between them and the prophecies of Isaiah and all the prophets be fulfilled, That the Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would be King over all the earth” (Rabbi Daniel Zion).

Dear Rabbis, we urge you to reconsider who Jesus really is. Just like Rabbi Daniel Zion, it may cost you your pride, your authority and your livelihood. But following the truth of God and his Messiah is worth more than any worldly treasure, or respect from people.



Chapter 29

Was Jesus a False Prophet?

Jesus always pointed the way to the God of Israel, and not to some foreign pagan idol.

The rabbis claim that Jesus was a false prophet who led the people of Israel astray into idolatry. They base this on what is written in Deuteronomy 18:20, *“But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.”* This verse says that a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods should be put to death, and that such a prophet should be considered a false prophet. Rabbi Menashe Yisrael, while referring to this verse, claims that Jesus, “Deteriorated to idolatry, bewitched, incited and caused Israel to sin.” Early rabbinical literature painted a picture in which the disciples of Jesus worshiped three different gods and therefore today they accuse Jesus, his disciples, and all his followers of believing in three gods. But those who read the New Testament for themselves will come to the conclusion that the truth is quite the opposite.

Jesus and his disciples always pointed to the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and commanded them to worship him and only him. Jesus always pointed everyone to his heavenly Father, the God of Israel, through the miracles he performed, the things he said and the way he lived. He lived, died and rose from the dead in order to glorify God, and he did so while remaining faithful to His Jewish heritage. He didn’t cause anyone to worship idols; on the contrary, he turned all who followed him towards God. Many Gentiles who were worshiping other gods and following pagan rites came to believe in the one God of Israel. Today, thanks to Jesus, the God of Israel is known in thousands of languages and dialects throughout the world.

In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 15 and in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 5, Jesus performed signs and wonders before the people of Israel; he healed the lame, the crippled, the blind and the mute and did many other miracles. When the people saw the mute speaking, the lame walking and blind seeing, they all were filled with awe and began to sing and praise... and who were they praising? The God of Israel. Why? Because they linked Jesus and the miracles they saw him do to the God of Israel. Also the things that Jesus taught when he spoke to the people always glorified the God of Israel. Below are a few examples:

Jesus said: "*Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 5:16) or

"*Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 5:44-45) or

"*Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'*" (Matthew 6:9-10).

Isn't it ironic that today, this Jewish prayer is considered as the Catholics' prayer!? The Kingdom and the desires of his heavenly Father were central in Jesus' life and work. He always paved the way to the God of Israel, and not to some foreign pagan idol. Jesus said: "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14:6). Jesus turned anyone who came to him toward his heavenly Father, to the God of Israel. The Messiah is the way to get to our heavenly Father. Thanks to Jesus, Gentiles, former idolaters and many pagans forsook their idols and began worshiping the God of Israel! This fact, that all around the world thousands of Gentiles are worshiping the God of Israel, is another proof that Jesus is indeed the Messiah; The Old Testament had prophesied that one of the main roles of the Messiah was to bring faith in the God of Israel to all the nations. And that is just what Jesus did.

The rabbis might forbid reading the New Testament, or even having one in your house, but those who dare to check it out for themselves will find

that the New Testament does not suggest worshiping several gods, or indeed any form of idolatry. Neither does it seek to invent a new religion. The people of Israel, who live every day in the real world, can sometimes forget the promise that God Himself gave to father Abraham in the book of Genesis: The promise that the Messiah would come through his seed and would be a blessing to all the nations of the world – to all the peoples, and not only the Jewish people. In Genesis 12:3, God says to Abraham “*and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*” God’s vision was always to reach all nations, not just one people. Today, the more religious you are, the more distant you get from the Gentiles, but God chose the people of Israel, so that through them He will reach the rest of the nations.

THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB HAS NOW REACHED THE NATIONS THANKS TO JESUS THE MESSIAH.

For one example, consider Pliny, Governor of Bithynia in minor Asia during the first century. Pliny wrote to Emperor Trajan that he was executing a huge number of men, women and children who would no longer bow to Trajan’s statues, since according to him, they now believed in the God of Israel... because of Jesus.

Another example, reading what Jewish disciples of Jesus said, as documented in the New Testament, one can see the exact same message: Through Jesus the Messiah, both Jews and Gentiles can enjoy a close relationship with the God of Israel. In the New Testament, one can read more than 1,200 references to the God of Israel: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This point is clear: Jesus the Messiah turned ALL people to worship the God of Israel.

Think about it, Jesus was the only prophet who walked the earth who efficiently fulfilled his role to bring people closer to the God of Israel. Thanks to him, millions of Gentiles love the God of Israel, serve and worship him, and all that in the name of Jesus – the Jewish Messiah. The problem is that the rabbis prefer to keep the power in their own hands; they love the control and the right to tell everyone what to do and how to live, even if it means that they have shut the door to the Jewish Messiah, under the pretense that he is a false prophet.

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Chapter 30

Do We Believe in Three Gods as the Rabbis Claim?

“Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there; And now the Lord God has sent me, and His Spirit.” Isaiah 48:16

There's a rumor going around that the New Testament supposedly teaches a belief in three gods. To begin with, it's important to understand that this false rumor does not exist by accident. It is based on deliberate brainwashing that has been pushed for 2,000 years, and its purpose is to present the New Testament as pagan. For example, see the false statement of Rabbi Daniel Ballas on the “hidabroot” website, where he claims that believers in Jesus believe there are three different gods: “According to their belief, the creator of the entire universe is nothing but three gods.”

But no, we absolutely do not believe in three gods!

God is ONE, as the Prophet Isaiah said: *“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.”*

Now check this quote out:

“The mystery in the word YHWH: there are three steps, each existing by itself; nevertheless they are One, and are so united that one cannot be separated from the other. The same Holy and Ancient One, appears as three heads within one, and He is the head elevated three times. The Ancient Holy One, described as three and also the other lights, which are delegated from His source are included in the three.”

SOUNDS LIKE A CHRISTIAN QUOTE?
Well, it's NOT....

This is a quote from the most prestigious book in rabbinical mysticism – straight out of the Jewish book of The Zohar.

BUT WAIT,
THERE IS MORE...

*“Hear, O Israel: The **LORD** our **God**, the **LORD** is one.”*

Note that God's name appears three consecutive times. The Jewish Zohar explains that the expression “*Hear, O Israel: The **LORD** our **God**, the **LORD** is one*”, is actually three who are one: “Only through faith, in the vision of the Holy Spirit, the mystery of the audible voice is similar to this, for though it is one, yet it consists of three elements: Fire, air and water.” The truth is, that the Jewish book of The Zohar goes in great depth into the subject it calls “*Haraz de Shloscha*” – “The Mystery of the Three”, about the nature of One God with three dimensions/persons. The Zohar refers to God as of three heads, three spirits, three ways of appearance, three names, and three shades of interpretations that describe the divine nature. It would be interesting to know if Rabbi Daniel Ballas intends to accuse the Jewish book of The Zohar of being a “Pagan Christian” book?

One cannot, and probably should not, analyze the character of God as if in a laboratory, trying to understand exactly who or what he is. He said in the past: “*I am who I am.*” And through Isaiah, he said: “*My thoughts are not your thoughts.*” We cannot worship an infinite God that our finite mind is able to fully contain. We can never fully understand God, but it is possible to identify clues about his character throughout the Hebrew Scriptures (OT). To begin with, God is not made of matter, he is abstract. Yet, he can manifest himself in material forms, whether it's in the form of a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire, or as the Angel of God, or in the form of the Messiah. The Hebrew Scriptures reveal God as One who sits up above, and at the same time, lives in the Temple. He fills the prophets with his Spirit, while his Glory fills the entire universe. God is infinitely complex in the forms and whereabouts in which he manifests himself.

In Isaiah 48:16, God says, *“Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there; And now the Lord God has sent me, and His Spirit.”*

Is God saying that YHWH sent himself? Together with his Spirit? Genesis 1:26, *“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”* Does God speak of Himself in plural form?

We can go on and on, and spend long hours quoting more verses throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, from the writings of the Jewish Sages, and of course from the New Testament, that all indicate that One God somehow manifests Himself in three different persons. But you already got the idea.

God, loves the humanity he created, and has appeared to us in different ways. One of the forms in which God showed himself to us is in the form of the Messiah. He took on flesh and demonstrated his great love for us by suffering with us and for us. He sacrificed his own life on the cross so he could take our sins upon himself, so that we would not be compelled to worship him out of fear or legalistic religious duty, but in response to his love, and in gratitude for what he has done on our behalf.



Chapter 31

Is Jesus Just a Copy of Eastern Religion?

Multiple gods? Pagan virgin birth stories? Eastern mysticism? Do these parallel the story of Jesus as some rabbis say?

Rabbi Daniel Asor claims that the story of Jesus is a copy of Eastern stories of pagan idols such as those found in Hinduism. The rabbi attempts to prove this by presenting “similarities” between Jesus and various idols or characters from Eastern religions. In order to do so, the rabbi quotes some outdated ideas from about 200 years ago but he’s unable to quote even one single modern source. Why? Because there are no such sources. Today, informed scholars understand that these ideas do not hold water. These ideas, which appeared in the nineteenth century were refuted long ago, some even by Jewish biblical researchers and historians due to several archaeological findings, such as the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves of Qumran.

But what about all the parallels between Krishna and Jesus? Could these parallels prove that Jesus’ life events were copies from other religions? If so, then Asor has managed not only to dismiss the narratives of the Messiah’s Gospel but also the narratives of the Old Testament along with it, because parallels also exist between the Pentateuch and the literature of the Ancient East. Does Rabbi Asor intend to tell us that just because there are similarities between the Old Testament’s stories and literature from Mesopotamia, Shumar, Egypt, Babel, Ashur, and Greece, that it means that Moses poached the story of creation from other religions? Or did he copy the commandments of the Law from the laws of Hammurabi? Will Rabbi Asor claim that Noah is an imaginary character because of flood stories in other religions? Of course the rabbi wouldn’t dare to say such things: otherwise he wouldn’t be a rabbi anymore.

So what is the true source of the writings about the divinity of Jesus? If the rabbi had handled the Gospels with minimal academic integrity, he would have understood that the writers of the New Testament came to these conclusions based on the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. They weren't even acquainted with Eastern philosophies.

Professor Benjamin Sommer, a Jewish scholar who specializes in Old Testament research, wrote a book dedicated to the subject of God's revelation to men in the flesh and based on the Old Testament. He writes:

“This study forces a re-evaluation of the Jewish attitude toward Christianity. Some Jews regard Christianity’s claim to be a monotheistic religion with grave suspicion, both because of the doctrine of the trinity (how can three equal one?) and because of Christianity’s core belief that God put on flesh, meaning, took bodily form for himself. Biblical Israel knew very similar doctrines, and these doctrines didn’t disappear from Judaism after the biblical period” (Professor Daniel Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*, pp. 135).

Or to put it simply, the Jewish professor admits that the idea of God revealing himself to humanity as a man in the flesh is actually a biblical Jewish concept.

Rabbi Daniel Asor is trying to compare Jesus to pagan gods like Horus, Attis, Krishna, Dionysus and Mithra. According to Asor, they were also born on December 25th, were born to virgins, had twelve disciples, performed miracles, were crucified to death and resurrected after three days. But the New Testament doesn't claim that Jesus was born on December 25th. Actually, the assumption is that Jesus was born during the Feast of the Tabernacles (Sukkot), and in any case, none of these gods were born on December 25th. And none of them had twelve disciples.

For example, in the Persian version, Mithra had one disciple: Verona. In the Roman version, he had two disciples. But even if we add them together, one plus two equals three, not twelve. None of the characters mentioned were born to virgins. For example, while Attis was in the womb of his mother, he turned from a fruit (a pomegranate, to be exact) into a man, and

it doesn't say that his mother was a virgin. Krishna was the eighth child by his mother Devaki, so she definitely couldn't have been a virgin. The only idol whose story is linked with a virgin birth is Mithra. But pay attention to the words of Professor Yamutzi, a Japanese researcher and historian who specializes in Mithraism religion: "We can find the earliest real Mithra at the beginning of the second century AD. Most of the evidence we have about Mithra originates in the second, third and fourth centuries AD. There is a fundamental flaw in the theories that Mithraism affected the beginning of Messianism and of Christianity" (Professor Yamuzi).

Did you get it? Mithra's virgin birth story is the one that was copied from the New Testament and not the other way around! None of these gods were crucified to death on a cross and resurrected after three days. Attis, for example, died next to a tree but he wasn't crucified - nor was he resurrected. Krishna was shot to death by a hunter who mistook him for a deer, and he was not resurrected.

There is one version among many, which was created during the fourth century AD that suggests a theory where Dionysus was crucified, but this of course was long after the time of the New Testament and in any case, he was not resurrected.

Additionally, regarding the subject of death and resurrection from the dead, one can find critical differences between Jesus and the idols. These idols are not described as those who willingly gave their lives as an atoning sacrifice for sins, but rather they died as a result of a hunting accident, castration and other injuries, not as a result of sacrificial love for another. And as for the miracles, while it was claimed that some of them could perform miracles, none of their miracles compare with the miracles of Jesus. They didn't raise people from the dead, didn't turn water into wine, didn't walk on water, didn't heal lepers, didn't open the eyes of the blind and didn't do the miracles Jesus did. Therefore, it is an interesting fact that even the Talmudic rabbis recognize and document the fact that Jesus and his disciples performed supernatural wonders and miracles. It is also important to understand that many people in history had similar sayings, but it doesn't turn them into idolaters or even necessarily into copycats.

Philosopher Ron Nash:

“During the period running roughly from 1890 to 1940, scholars often alleged that the early Christian church was heavily influenced by such philosophical movements as Platonism and Stoicism and other Pagan religions or Hellenistic movements in the world. Allegations of early Christianity’s dependence on its Hellenistic environment began to fade in publications of biblical and classical scholars, largely as a result of a series of scholarly books and articles written in an effort to refute them. Today, most informed scholars regard the question as a dead issue.”

The earliest church from the first century until Constantine was arguably more influenced by the teachings of the Apostles than by other philosophical influences. The rabbi is counting on the likelihood that you will simply believe his lies and won’t bother to check the facts for yourselves. No notable historian or biblical scholar has made such claims for a very long time. But all this doesn’t prevent Rabbi Asor from using these outdated arguments, in an attempt to hide Jesus from you.



Chapter 32

Answering Rabbinic Objections Against Jesus' Resurrection

"For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption"
(Psalm 16:10).

According to the New Testament, the resurrection of Jesus after his crucifixion and death is God's preordained confirmation of the Messiah's divine authority over life and over death.

Throughout history the Messianic faith has had to stand its ground against Bible criticism, historical research, and of course, attacks of the rabbis: all trying to refute the fact of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Each and every one of us will be here only for a short time, for a few decades, our lives are like a "layover", or an exam, if you like. But the Messiah is unique - an exception - because he conquered death. Jesus' resurrection is without a doubt one of the greatest miracles in history... Or ... the most clever deception that fooled millions of people. Many have tried to refute the veracity of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

WHY ALL THIS OPPOSITION?

Because if Jesus truly rose from the dead, it would mean that he really is the Messiah and that the New Testament is right. And if Jesus did not rise from the dead? Then we and millions of others are living in an illusion.

According to the Bible, the life, death and resurrection of this Jewish man from Nazareth, Yeshua, split time in two. His crucifixion became the most famous death in history and caused a revolution that started in Jerusalem and reached the ends of the earth. Three days after his death and

burial, Jesus rose from the dead and his grave was found empty. After this it is told that within 40 days he appeared to many people throughout all of Israel, including groups of more than 500 people.

The rumor about the Jewish Messiah who died for the sin of humanity, conquered death and rose again, started to spread fast. The Romans couldn't explain the fact that his body had disappeared from the grave. On the other hand, the rabbis of his time claimed that Jesus was performing supernatural miracles and wonders by the power of Satan. But surely this was a miracle too far for most people to comprehend.

MOST SKEPTICS HAVE TRIED TO COME UP WITH THEORIES ON THIS MATTER.

Maybe the Jesus story was made up hundreds of years later?

The problem with this theory is that contemporary historians and even Jesus' greatest enemies do mention him and this event.

Maybe they just checked the wrong grave?

If that was the case, the Roman rulers and the rabbis would have quickly pointed out the right grave.

Maybe the appearance of Jesus was simply a hallucination in some intoxicated minds?

Maybe that could happen to a small group of people. But to hundreds, even thousands of people, over a period of 40 days? Also, this would not explain where the corpse went.

Maybe Jesus simply passed out for a while and later recovered? (Swoon theory)

See for example what Rabbi Daniel Asor says: "And who says that Yesu simply experienced clinical death and woke up in the grave and regained consciousness? Do we have a way to disprove this? Maybe, at this time, they did not determine death properly? And he was just not actually dead?"

The eyewitnesses of the New Testament knew the circumstances of the resurrection very well. In accordance with the Jewish tradition, the body of

Jesus was wrapped tightly in shrouds and anointed with spices. This ‘anointing with spices’ was not a light sprinkling of fragrance, but about 40 kilos of spices and resin were mixed together, forming a thick, sticky compound, like rubber, which hardened on the body. Moreover, the opening of the grave was blocked with an enormous stone covering, weighing something like two tons.

Following the uproar that took place in Jerusalem surrounding the crucifixion, the religious leaders remembered that Jesus spoke about coming back to life after three days. They made sure that their people kept an eye on the grave. Moreover, they demanded that Pilate should station soldiers to guard the grave. Along with a Roman guard of multiple soldiers, the grave was sealed with a Roman seal. Had someone dared to move the stone from the grave, the seal would have been broken and the transgressor would have had to face the wrath of the Roman authorities. And the guards, failing to protect the grave, would have been punished.

FROM A HISTORICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL AND SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT, THE SWOON THEORY DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

Consider what the scientist David Strauss wrote about 200 years ago:

“This idea that a creature creeping out of his own grave, ‘half dead’, sick and weak, in urgent need of medical treatment, clothing, recuperation and support, would succeed to awake in his disciples the impression of being the Prince of Life and conqueror of death and grave; an impression that was the foundation of their future actions, this idea is simply unreasonable. Such a resurrection would only weaken the disciples’ impression, make them sad and cause disappointment. And certainly not turn their grief into excitement, nor their fear into worship” (Dr. Strauss).

Rabbi Asor’s claim is not only illogical from a philosophical and historical point of view but also from a scientific point of view. John describes something that only today science can explain. When Jesus was crucified, a Roman soldier pierced his side. In the New Testament John

explains: “*But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water*” (John 19:34).

2000 years ago this would certainly seem odd. Why did John bother to point this out? Today, the science of physiology teaches that when a human dies, the blood in his body separates into serum: a transparent liquid like water and red blood cells. Without knowing it, John proved scientifically that Jesus was indeed dead.

Okay, so he really died. But maybe his disciples stole the corpse?

Anyone who knows about the Roman guard system knows that this is impossible. Ancient Roman soldiers, out of fear for their own lives, would never let this happen. Unlikely as it sounds, let’s suppose the disciples of Jesus had tricked the soldiers or somehow drugged them. Moving a stone weighing two tons would alert everyone, awake or asleep. And if that were the case, the rabbis of the Sanhedrin as well as the Roman authorities, would have made an immediate public outcry and retrieved the stolen corpse in front of everyone. This obviously did not happen. And don’t forget that Jesus was buried in the grave of the Sanhedrin member, Joseph of Arimathea which means that next to the Roman guards there were others that had an eye on the grave. Furthermore, the stolen corpse theory fails to explain away how Jesus appeared to so many people and over such a long period of time. By the way, if today it is almost impossible to make a corpse disappear how much more so back in that day without elaborate technology or getaway cars.

Consider what Dr. Jeff Burkes says, a famous Jewish surgeon from New York, who won an award thanks to his expertise in identifying bodies in the wake of the attack on the Twin Towers on 9/11. As a Jew, he decided to publish his story and argues, among other things, that after thoroughly examining the matter of the resurrection he came to the conclusion that Jesus is indeed the Messiah:

“Yeshua’s resurrection is real. With all the archaeology and technology nobody ever could find his body. And it’s almost impossible to get rid of a corpse. And if his resurrection is true everything he said is true as well. Therefore, He is the promised Jewish Messiah” (Dr. Jeff Burkes).

But maybe the most convincing testimony is the life of the first believers, after the resurrected Jesus appeared to them. In their excitement, they began traveling throughout the world, full of energy, joy, hope and optimism. They worked miracles and wonders in the name of Jesus in front of everyone: Miracles that even the Talmud describes as supernatural (Avodat Zerah 17a, 27b). They gave up their own honor, their possessions, their social status and as it seems, also many of their relationships. And for what? To be scorned, cursed, persecuted, beaten, stoned and eventually dying as lions' prey or on a cross or stoned and burned alive by those trying to silence them. But even then, they were full of joy and thanksgiving and sang praise songs to God. They were people of peace, who never used violence or forced their faith on anyone. On the contrary, **they were so sure of their faith in Yeshua that they were willing to even die for his name.** And even today, whoever believes in Jesus the Messiah has the same absolute certainty just like those Messianic Jews 2000 years ago: That the crucified Messiah conquered death and granted us eternal life.

THE BIBLE FORETELLS THE RESURRECTION

In a sense, Jesus rising from the dead wasn't meant to be a big surprise since the Bible already prophesied about his resurrection. As we studied earlier in Isaiah 53, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus was explained in sufficient detail. If all this is so, we should not be surprised that in second temple Judaism they expected that when the Messiah comes he would die and rise again.

Professor Israel Knohl, scholar for religion from Hebrew University, Jerusalem decoded an archaeological inscription dated before Christ, that points to a vision about the resurrection of a messianic leader. The stone inscription was named "Vision of Gabriel". Pay attention to this: Professor Knohl explains that the angel Gabriel will in three days after his death resurrect a messianic leader, called "Prince of Princes". He is the leader of Israel. Professor Knohl says:

“It can be determined that when the vision was written, at the end of the 1st century BC, prevailed in some circles the view that the Messiah’s death and resurrection after three days is a vital part of the salvation plan. Therefore, if there was a Jewish tradition of a resurrected Messiah we understand Yeshu[a] as the national Jewish Messiah that is going to his death.”

AMAZING, ISN’T IT?

Long before the rabbinical tradition seized control over Judaism, the people of Israel believed that the Messiah had to die and rise from the dead on the third day. Jesus conquered for us humanity’s biggest enemy: death, so that we could inherit eternal life. Our sins have been atoned for by his blood, and we are forgiven. The resurrection is vital proof that the sacrifice of the Messiah was successful, and acceptable to God. In the past, God’s Spirit dwelled in the temple, but before Jesus ascended back to the Father, he promised that he would send his Spirit to dwell in those who believe in him, and who have been purified from their sin. And he can live in you as well!

When making your choice between man’s religion or God’s true word, there is too much at stake to let the rabbis or anyone else do your thinking for you. Take back the Key to Knowledge and let the Bible have the last word.



Chapter 33

Is Jesus Just for the Simple and Uneducated?

Jesus has a lot to offer the thinking person, as these Jewish intellectuals affirm.

Will an educated person inevitably reject the message of Jesus? And what about intelligent Jews? Would they automatically reject Jesus and His teachings? Is it only fools and uneducated people that are impressed by the message of Jesus?

This is what the rabbis want you to believe at least – see for example what Rabbi Aaron Moss wrote on chabad.org: “The missionaries choose to target those in society who are weak, old, immigrants and deprived populations, in an attempt to take advantage of their vulnerability... Of course they have nothing to offer to a thinking person...”

IS RABBI MOSS CORRECT?

Let's allow an educated Jew, a thinker, to respond: The Jewish scientist, **Albert Einstein**, answered the question, do you accept Jesus as an historical figure? Here is his reply: “Absolutely! No one can read the Gospels without feeling Jesus' presence. His character lives in every word. No legend is full of such life... No one can deny the fact that Jesus existed, or that His words were enlightened. Even if some of His sayings were said before, no one expressed them in such Godly way like He did.”

The Jewish writer, **Shalom Ash**, whose stories were turned into theater plays all over the world, wrote: “Jesus is the most prominent figure of all times. There is no other teacher – Jewish, Christian, Buddhist or Muslim. His teachings are still milestones in the world we live in. Other teachers

might have something basic to offer the Easterner, Arab or the Westerner; but in every act or word of Jesus, there is value for us all. He became the light of the world. Why wouldn't I, as a Jew, be proud of that?"

Professor **Mordechai Buber** of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem wrote in his book, *Two Kinds of Faith*: "Today, more than ever, I am convinced that Jesus has a great place in history, and in the faith of the People of Israel."

The Jewish philosopher **Baruch Spinoza** wrote: "God's eternal wisdom, showed itself in everything, especially in the human soul, but above all, in Jesus the Messiah" (Letter #21 to Henry Oldenburg, November 1675).

Benjamin Disraeli was Prime Minister of Britain during the nineteenth century and one of the greatest British politicians of his time. He was a prolific international author and recipient of a Nobel title from the Queen. He was Jewish, but also believed that Jesus was the Messiah. He said the following: "Between the Old and New Testaments, there is a page... Jesus came to complete the Law and the Prophets. Christianity is completed Judaism".

Believe it or not, even rabbis came to the conclusion that Jesus had something to offer them. **Rabbi Dr. Daniel Zion**, head rabbi of Bulgaria and of the city of Jaffa, said in a radio interview for Kol Israel: "Jesus did nothing but good for his Jewish brothers in Israel. He called on them to show regret and to return to God. He declared God's Kingdom and called for love, love for all people, even love for enemies."

Rabbi Israel Zolly, head rabbi of Rome during the Holocaust, told how he came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah on the Day of Atonement in 1944, when Jesus came to him in a vision. Many don't realize this, but the famous saying, "Once a Jew, always a Jew", actually originated in relation to faith in Jesus. When asked, "why did you leave the synagogue for the church?" he answered: "I didn't leave... Faith in Jesus is the completion of the synagogue. The synagogue is the promise, and Christianity is the fulfillment of the promise. Once a Jew, always a Jew."

Rabbi Dr. Kaufman said about Jesus: “These are the words of a Prophet, of a fearless reformer. With the same courage of genuine love with which he converted sinners, Jesus also defended the woman in whom the rabbis only saw an instrument in the hands of Satan to entice men to sin, and Jesus shattered the forces making the woman’s lot lonely. Jesus was the helper of needy, the friend of sinners, the brother of all sufferers, the comforter of the unfortunate, the lover of mankind, the liberator of the woman, he won and conquered the human heart.”

Many other non-Jewish philosophers and educated people also praised Jesus. The famous physician and mathematician, **Sir Isaac Newton**, considered one of the greatest scientists of all time, said: “I have deep faith in the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God.”

Philosopher and **Professor C.S. Lewis**, also known for his “Narnia” book series , wrote of Jesus: “No lunatic could be the source of psychological understandings so deep and efficient as those of Jesus Christ.”

Spiritual leader, **Mahatma Gandhi** said, “Jesus, who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was the most perfect act.”

Napoléon wrote during his last days: “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires, but on what did we rest the creations of our genius? On force! Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour, millions all over the world are willing to die for him.”

Nobel Peace Prize winner, **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** said: “Jesus was jealous for love, justice and kindness. In that he rose above his surroundings.”

The great scientist, **Blaise Pascal**, a mathematician, physician and a philosopher, wrote: “There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man, which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through the Messiah.”

In conclusion, it seems that the emotional manipulation of Rabbi Aaron Moss is without basis, and that Jesus has a lot to offer to the thinking person, to every Jew and Gentile, and also to you.



Chapter 34

Do Jewish People Need (Jesus as) a Mediator?

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”
(John 14:6).

The Old Testament teaches that because sin entered the world, there is no longer a direct relationship between human beings and God, as there was in the beginning. The sin in us separates us from God. The prophet Isaiah described the situation very well: *“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear”* (Isaiah 59:1-2).

In the Pentateuch we learn that when God gave the Law, only the high priests were allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, and then only after they had first offered a sacrifice to purify themselves. The priests are the ones who mediated between the people of Israel and God. Generally it is true that every Jew could cry out to God and beg for His mercy. But, without the atoning sacrifice offered by the high priest, no Jew could enter the presence of God. Therefore, one of the roles of the Messiah (as foretold by the prophets) is to be a high priest.

The Messiah was not to be a regular priest who offers sacrifices for atonement, but the ultimate high priest, who is a sacrifice and atonement for us in himself. Because of his sacrifice, our sins are forgiven and through him the door to God is opened for us. However, for obvious reasons, many rabbis today oppose this Old Testament principle which is rooted so deeply in the Scriptures and claim that every Jew, wherever he is, has constant and direct access to God.

For example, in the words of Rabbi Daniel Asor: “The Prophet Jeremiah writes: *‘And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.’”*

The Rabbi quotes a single verse from Jeremiah 31:34 and promotes his claim: “The verse teaches that because of the direct forgiveness of sins, without any mediation, everyone will know Him directly.” Apparently, everyone suddenly enjoys a direct relationship with God with no new covenant and no mediator, but all this stands in complete contrast to all of the texts in the Old Testament that contradict him. For one example, in 2 Chronicles 26, King Uzziah decided to enter the Temple and light incense. He might have had good intentions, but he was struck with leprosy because he entered the Holy Place and did something that only the priests were permitted to do. Even the kings had to go through a mediator: through the high priest, in order to fellowship with God.

It would be interesting to see what might have happened to Rabbi Asor, if he was to enter the Holy of Holies at the Temple... but let's get back to Jeremiah 31. The following passage will appear again near the end of the book but this time, watch how Rabbi Asor isolated a single verse out of its context. Let's read the verse again, this time we'll begin with some of the previous verses, from the beginning of God's proclamation starting at verse 31:

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,

declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

God promised there would be a condition on knowing him in this direct way; that there would be a new covenant instead of the Mosaic covenant he made with the people of Israel after the Exodus. Unlike the Mosaic covenant which was written on tablets of stone, this new covenant would be written on the heart. Thanks to the sacrificial atonement of the Messiah, our hearts can be cleansed and purified from our iniquities and now God can write his new covenant on our hearts.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul in chapter 10 of his letter to the Hebrews explains it this way: *“Since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water”* (Hebrews 10:19-22). God made a new covenant with us thanks to the Messiah, who cleansed our hearts from sin.

Jesus declared: *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). He also said, *“I am the door of the sheep”* (John 10:7). The “door of the sheep” is the gate through which the people of Israel brought their animal sacrifices to the high priest at the temple to atone for their sins. But now, the sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah and his resurrection have opened the door to heaven for us all; Jews and Gentiles alike. Thanks to him, our sins are forgiven. We have direct access to God himself. Jesus is the high priest, he is the mediator. He is the one who brought in the new covenant, a covenant made with his own blood.

Did you notice the irony and the hypocrisy in Rabbi Asor’s sayings? While he opposes the Messiahship of Jesus saying that the people of Israel don’t need mediators, he gives himself the title “Rabbi”. The whole concept of being a ‘rabbi’ is based on people who took upon themselves the place of a mediator between the “Jewish layman” and God. Rabbis are more than

happy to make judgements about how to apply the Law on God's behalf, and their communities depend on their pronouncements instead of going to God directly to ask him what he thinks. The entire Orthodox community believes that the wise rabbi represents God and connects between them and God.

Sadly, one of the most prominent customs of the Orthodox community is lying prostrate on graves and praying to dead rabbis or to heroes of the past, hoping that through their mediation God will forgive their sins. See for example the prayer of Rabbi Chaim Ben-Attar: "Oh Merciful King! I have come today to prostrate myself on the Tomb of Rachel our Matriarch. Let her good acts that she has done throughout her life stand in my favor, especially her righteousness and heartfelt prayers to you... In her merit, Rachel our Matriarch, please forgive us for all our transgressions and iniquities, and our sins that we have committed."

By the way, prostrating on graves is idolatry, which is forbidden in the Mosaic Law. In Numbers 19, God says to the people of Israel that whoever touches a grave, his soul will be cut off from Israel. This, to our regret, doesn't prevent hundreds of thousands of Orthodox and rabbis prostrating themselves on graves every year.

While in Old Testament times it was the priests who mediated between the people of Israel and God, we now can have a relationship and a direct connection with God through Jesus the Messiah, the high priest of us all. Jesus opened the door for us to the Holy of Holies and to God's throne of grace in heaven. Through his blood and sacrifice, he enabled us to directly approach the holy presence of God. This is the mediator we need. Without him, the door is locked before us, but thanks to him it is wide open to those who believe.



Part Three: Challenging Rabbinic Judaism (Polemics against Rabbinic Judaism)

Chapter 35

Is God Religious? Does He Wear a Yarmulke?

“For freedom Messiah has set us free...”

Assuming that God DOES exist.... Does that mean that the way to reach him is through religion? In order to know God, is it necessary to dress in a certain way, grow a beard or eat certain foods? Does God expect his people to walk around with round pieces of fabric on their heads? Or to bind their arms with strips made of leather every morning? The term “religion”, the term “rabbis” and the term “Toshba” (“Torah sh-be-al-pe” - the Oral Law) never appear in the Old Testament, not even once. Did you know that “Moshe Rabbenu” (our Rabbi Moses) wasn’t even a rabbi? That the prophet Isaiah never set foot in a synagogue? That on Noah’s ark there was no sink in which to perform “Netilat Yadayim” (washing of the hands)? That King David didn’t kiss mezuzahs on the doorposts of his palace? That Abraham DID boil meat in milk, and that Rachel didn’t light Shabbat candles? People have gotten used to connecting these concepts without giving it a lot of critical thought. People equate “God” with “religion”.

Religion causes war, right? Catholics tortured Jews in the Inquisition, Muslims cut off the heads of Christians, Jews butchered and wiped out the Seleucids, Hindus fought the Buddhists and the examples of people who murder and torture each other in the name of God are, sadly, far too many to

grasp. Many think that the world would be a better place without religion, and may even suspect that God agrees with them too. After all, God never asked that religions be created for Him. But the root of the problem isn't religion; After all, even people who have absolutely no faith in God have also murdered hundreds of millions of people, and are still doing so today. Nobody truly knows exactly what Hitler believed in, but author Max Domarus indicated that in 1937 Hitler announced he did not believe in the God of the Jews or the Christians. Author Alan Bullock wrote that had Hitler promised, as soon as the war was over, that he would exterminate Christianity and eliminate its influence in Europe. Stalin, who was responsible for the murder of 20–40 million people, declared himself an atheist from his teens. Also Pol Pot, who executed millions of Cambodians, was a self-proclaimed atheist. The Chinese communist, Mao Zedong, caused the deaths of tens of millions of Chinese. He too was an atheist: Which means that throughout the 20th century, hundreds of millions of people were murdered by atheists and not only in the name of religion. So the problem is not in any specific religion, organization, movement or denomination. The problem is within the human heart.

Taking God's name in vain: One cannot blame God for the foolish behavior of religious people. After all, this is precisely why God warned in advance and commanded not to take His name in vain – not to pretend that all those evils are done in His name. However, there is no doubt that society holds people to a higher standard when they claim to represent God, and that is why people examine the outcomes of religion very carefully and attribute them to God. Death and wars in the name of religion, hatred, pride and condescension, judgment and hypocrisy, corruption and religious coercion – all these are automatically projected onto God Himself. Many turn their backs on religion and therefore automatically turn their backs on God as well.

Notwithstanding, a challenge remains for the reader to consider that not only is God not religious, but that religion – any religion – actually contradicts God's message.

Does God become infuriated when his chosen ones enter their rooms on Shabbat and turn on the heater, or the lights? Or when they tear toilet paper

when going to the bathroom? Does God really care if people enjoy a cheesecake after their Wiener Schnitzel? What about the color of clothing? Does God really demand that His people only wear black and white every day of their lives? Would God take vengeance, punish or hate his people if they don't light the Hanukkah candles? Or maybe all those religious laws and commandments have been invented by people to generate fear, and to create a dependency on the rabbis? All in order to keep the power and control in their hands... in the name of God?

You see, if a person convinces me that God will be angry with me if I walk around without a piece of fabric on my head, I develop a dependency on that person, because he is the one who teaches me what kind of fabric, what shape and color the fabric on my head must be, how many steps I am allowed to take without it and so forth. This means that he has control over me. He has power over me. That power is like an addictive drug: Especially for the dominator, but also for the dominated. And that is why it has been said that "religion is the opium of the people".

AND THAT IS PRECISELY THE MEANING OF TAKING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN.

If the God who created all mankind and everything in the universe is so big and so strong, if the one who invented the laws of thermodynamics, the structure of the chromosome and photosynthesis, is truly above every human oligarch, president or king, isn't it absurd to infer that he would bother with 3,000 rules on how to plant zucchini which weren't even commanded by him? In the Bible, in Isaiah 29, God is disappointed with Israel for this very reason; because they believed that through the traditions of their religious leaders they would be able to reach Him. Here are the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

"These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught." (Isaiah 29:13).

Through Isaiah, God says that Israel's heart was far from him and that their respect for him was artificial – based on rules invented by people.

People invent rules, rules create traditions and traditions create religions. If anyone went to the effort of comparing the rules of different religions, they would discover (to little surprise, no doubt) how similar they all are to each other. They focus on the same sorts of laws: rules concerning the external, such as what to wear, what direction to face when praying, or in which position to pray, what is permitted and what is forbidden to eat, how, how much, when and where – all the while believing that THIS is the way to reach God.

Then what does God want, if not religion? The problem is that all of these external rules make no difference and have no positive impact on our hearts. Much like the prophet Isaiah, Paul the apostle writes in the New Testament: *“The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does... For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy...”* (Romans 14:3/17).

It's true that most Jewish people today consider the New Testament to be a “Christian” work, but the actual truth is that it's about a group of Jews that lived in Israel during the time of the second temple. That little group of disciples, along with their spiritual teacher, Yeshua, challenged the perception that through external rules and actions one can find, or please God. This of course led to their opponents (the religious leaders in Israel) to reject them, inciting and turning the Israeli public against them. However, just like Isaiah and the other prophets in the Bible, they too did not back down. Their message was the driving wind in the sails of anyone who was fed up with the religious coercion of the time, which still exists to this day as can be seen in the next chapter.

Jesus the Messiah preached constantly about how religion does not lead to God. Jesus and his disciples were joined not only by many thousands of Jews, but also tens of thousands of Gentiles. His message changed their lives. Jesus wasn't another one of those rabbis who invented rules which must be kept in order to earn points with God. In fact, he claimed the exact opposite of what was claimed by any religious leader before him – he taught that God could only be served through the Spirit: *“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”*

(John 4:24). **And what are the fruits of such spiritual labor?** “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*” (Galatians 5:22-23).

In conclusion, for those who are fed up with religious coercion, who are sick of people using the name of God for their own agenda and taking his name in vain, for those who are tired of being lost in a labyrinth of strange religious rules – WAIT. Turning away from God because of religious fabrications would be a big mistake. A better way is to honor the Torah as it was written, but try setting the rabbis and their religious rules aside for a moment and go back to before this whole mess began. Start searching from there.



Chapter 36

How to Treat Women: The Rabbis vs Jesus

Maimonides said that, in a trial: “women are disqualified from testifying”. Contrast that with Jesus choosing two women as witnesses of his resurrection.

Rabbi Ashi claims that it is permitted to divorce a woman if the gap between her breasts is too large: “This spacing is unsuitable and it is considered a defect which allows to divorce her without rights.”

Rabbi Baghdadi: “A woman who cheats on her husband would be taken out and burnt immediately.”

Rabbi Isaac Cohen: “In the true world they will see; a woman is a bag full of excrement.”

Rabbi Eyal Karim: “It is permissible to rape a woman from an enemy army, to raise the morale of the soldiers.”

Rabbi Eliezer Berland: “A woman doesn’t think and lacks the double brain a man has.”

Rabbi Storm: “A woman must not be allowed to drink wine, for if she drinks too much, she will desire to have sex with a donkey in the marketplace.”

Rabbi Yossi Mizrachi: “A man rapes a woman and gets her pregnant? He has fulfilled the commandment of procreation. And for the rapist? It is considered a mitzvah.”

Rabbi Uri Sherki: “Women menstruate because of their sins.”

Rabbi Elyashiv: “It is permissible to put to shame a woman if she uses the religious buses.”

Rabbi Arush: “A woman will never admit to her mistakes and cannot accept admonishment.”

Rabbi of the Western Wall: “Women diminish the sanctity of the synagogue floors.”

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef: “A woman who does not know how to cook is a cripple.”

Rabbi Aviner claims that in a state of emergency: “A man should be rescued before a woman.”

Rabbi Isaac Cohen: “Daughters are a punishment to their parents... Sons are a blessing... the numerological value of the word ‘daughters’ is equal to that of the word ‘damage’... sons bring peace to the world, sons bring affluence to the world, birthing daughters causes a great deal of putrefaction in the woman’s womb, women carry no good fortune... women are nothing, women are hollow... They are naught... the word ‘female’ has the same numerical value as the word ‘damned’... males are perfection.”

Rabbi Eitan Baghadi: “A woman who wears a short-sleeved shirt is committing first degree murder.”

Rabbi Amnon Itzhak: “Women are forbidden from driving a car, forbidden from owning a cellular phone, women are not allowed to gain weight; a woman is just as any other object.”

SCORN THEN AND NOW.

Dear women, if the attitude towards women among certain rabbis TODAY frightens you, try to imagine how much worse it was 2,000 years

ago, during the time of Jesus.

It's important to understand how deep the misogyny goes in Rabbinic Halacha and in the Talmud. Consider for a moment, the ramifications of these statements on the daily lives of mothers, daughters and women in general. And no, these are not a minority opinion, but rather the Rabbinic Halacha throughout the generations which trampled all respect towards women and treated them as insipid and practically worthless. Let's see what Jewish Sages of old have been teaching about women in the Talmud for the past 2000 years:

Rabbi Bahya Ben Asher said: "The female is irrelevant in creation, for she is not more than a parasitic thing taken from him for his utilization to become a special tool for his use as one of his special body parts to be used by him."

Midrash Bereishit Rabba, chapter 17: "As the woman was created, Satan was created with her."

Tractate Sotah, 22: "Whoever teaches his daughter Torah, teaches her obscenity."

RaLBaG (Gersonides) said: "They [women] have no more brains than animals, if they have any at all."

Maimonides wrote that females are suitable for sexual intercourse from age three and should be available for bearing children from age twelve. (Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Sefer Nashim, Ishut, chapter 3, halacha 11)

The Jerusalem Talmud says that it is forbidden to give jewelry to a woman, as women are arrogant. (Tractate Shabbat, chapter 6, page 33)

Rabbi Isaac Luria, one of the great philosophers in Kabbalah, would also spit on such women: "The Sacred Ari would therefore spit any time he saw an insolent woman and spitting at the sight of an immodest woman is a great virtue" (The Messiah's Donkey, page 182).

More gross and crude quotes could have been included, which would make you fall out of your chairs. But you already get the idea. Also, we would rather not bring them to mind and defile your thoughts, as well as our own.

Jesus introduced a very different attitude. One of the reasons why the rabbis who lived at the time of Jesus rejected Him was that Jesus threatened their authority. Whereas they treated women as something trivial and almost completely worthless, Jesus broke both religious and social constructs; he battled religious chauvinism and the humiliating treatment of women in his generation.

Maimonides said that, in a trial: “women are disqualified from testifying” (Laws of Testimony, Chapter 9, Halacha 2). Contrast that with the weight that Jesus put on the testimony of women in the New Testament. In Matthew chapter 28, Jesus chose two women as witnesses of his resurrection, entrusting them with the task of telling the other disciples what had happened. When Jesus saw his disciples again, he scolded them for not believing the women.

Maimonides also instructed husbands: “The husband should prevent his wife from leaving the household except once a month or twice a month if necessary as there is no beauty for a woman but to sit at the corner of her house.” Unlike Maimonides, who demanded that wives be locked in their homes, in the New Testament, Paul recommends a woman for a key position in the community and demands that all of her needs be met (Romans, chapter 16). In a separate incident, the New Testament praises a woman (Dorchas from Jaffa) for her good deeds and for the fact that she was often benevolent towards everyone in her area.

Tractate Derech Eretz advises staying away from women: “Do not talk to woman much, for every woman’s conversation is nothing but words of infidelity” (Tractate Derech Eretz, Ariot, Halacha 13). In contrast, Jesus encourages Miriam and Martha to stop running around doing household chores, relax and sit down to study the Torah with him.

While rabbis forbid physical contact between men and women and even encourage men to keep their distance from a woman's company, as it is written: "One who excessively converses with a woman causes evil to himself, neglects the study of Torah and in the end, inherits hell" (Avot, chapter 1).

Jesus did the exact opposite. Matthew chapter 9 describes the following:

"A ruler came in and knelt before him saying, 'My daughter has died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.' And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples. And behold, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, for she said to herself, 'If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.' Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And instantly the woman was made well. And when Jesus came to the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, 'Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose" (Matthew 9:18-25).

Jesus loved women, respected them as God's creation and refused to treat them as objects. Maimonides said: "Any woman who avoids doing the craft she must do shall be forced to do them, even with a whip" (Hilchot Ishot, chapter 21, halacha 10).

In response, Rabbi Avraham Ben-David claimed that, "it is sufficient to simply starve her until she gives in."

Unlike those two, **the New Testament instructs men:** "*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*" (Ephesians 5:25).

Instead of whipping, the New Testament orders men to give their lives for the sake of their wives. Jesus dared to oppose a social, cultural and gender-related convention that was made in the name of God and religion.

The book of John in the New Testament describes a situation in which the rabbis in the time of Jesus threw a woman who had been caught committing adultery at Jesus' feet, in order to test Him:

“The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. And placing her in the midst they said to him, ‘Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say? He stood up and said to them, ‘Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.’ When they heard it, they went away one by one... Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more’” (John 8:3-11).

What would Rabbi Yossi Mizrachi say about such a woman? “A woman who is not a virgin is a damaged female... She’s worth as much as an open cola bottle.”

In another event, Jesus broke another, equally significant, religious taboo when he not only willingly contacted and spoke to a woman, but a Samaritan woman - a Gentile! She was surprised that a Jewish man would even talk to her, and said to Jesus: “*‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?’*”

For the past 2,000 years, the rabbis have been trying to hide the Messiah from you, who not only loved and appreciated Jewish women, but Gentiles as well. The rabbis, whether or not they are aware of it, present the God of Israel in a cruel and false way, which is no more than a mirror reflecting their own misogynistic worldviews. Dear woman, it is important for you to know that God does not want to humiliate you. He does not see you as worthless and does not condemn you to a life of inferiority, servitude and abuse. He loves you and wants you to know who he really is. So much so, that he revealed himself in the form of the Messiah, lived among us as one of us, suffered with and for us and gave up his life as a sacrifice to atone for our sins. THAT is God’s love: For both women and men alike.

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Chapter 37

Who is “My Neighbor” that I Must Love?

“...it’s important to understand that the Judaism of the Sages contradicts the Judaism of the Bible.”

Probably the most famous saying in the Bible is: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (Leviticus 19:18). It’s a passage that everybody likes to quote. But only few know how to put in practice. In every reader’s mind the question naturally comes up:

“WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?”

Rambam interprets it like this, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”, claiming that our “neighbors”, our friends, includes only Jews who keep the rabbinical tradition and no one else. Everyone else is to be hated, according to the Talmud. Rambam, the rabbinical tradition and even today’s rabbis incite hatred against whoever is different. Here are some examples:

Rabbi Bagdadi says:

“Do you have an animal? Don’t leave it with a gentile, he will come and rape your animal, according to the Talmud.”

Rambam said:

“The gentile is not really a human being.”

Rabbi Tzadik, Priest of Lublin, claimed:

“Only Israel is called ‘human’. In comparison to Israel all the gentiles are anyhow like beasts that just look human.”

RABad adds:

“The gentiles are like beasts, a people similar to a donkey.”

Ha'ARI says:

“The gentiles have neither spirit nor soul and are not even equal to animals considered clean, but rather lower than them.”

What the Bible says about Gentiles and strangers:

It's important to understand that the Judaism of the Sages contradicts the Judaism of the Bible. The Torah commands:

“When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself...” (Leviticus 19:33-34).

Maybe someone should remind the rabbis that Melchizedek, King of Salem, a Gentile, receives in the book of Genesis a higher position than Abraham. Abraham gave him a tithe of all his possessions. In Exodus, we read about another Gentile, Jethro, a Midianite priest, who receives a higher position than Moses. And Moses does whatever Jethro tells him. Osnat, Joseph's wife, was a Gentile. Zipporah, Moses' wife, was a Gentile. David's grandmother, Ruth the Moabite, a Gentile. More names could be added to the list but by now you must have the idea. Lest we forget, Israelis owe it to the generosity of Gentile Christians who love Israel that today we have a strong nation and army.

Jesus gave a different answer to the question “Who is my neighbor?”

But is Rambam's interpretation correct? Whoever watched the last few episodes of *Seinfeld* surely remembers that they revolved around a law called “Good Samaritan Law”. According to this law, in Europe and in the US, each citizen is obliged to help anyone in distress. “Good Samaritan” a well-known term, but most Jewish people aren't aware of where it came from.

THE TERM “GOOD SAMARITAN” COMES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The New Testament tells of a time when the religious leaders asked Jesus a question about the command to love our neighbor, trying to catch him out: “*Who is the neighbor that I need to love?*” Jesus’ answer has become one of the most famous parables in history - the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

“A lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”

And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”

He said, “The one who showed him mercy.”

And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise” (Luke 10:25-37).

Jesus gave a radical interpretation of who we should consider our neighbor, in stark contrast to the teachings of Rambam and rabbinic tradition.

HOW REVOLUTIONARY WAS THIS TEACHING?

In the rabbinic tradition at that time, Samaritans were viewed in the same way as the Arabs are viewed today. According to Jesus we are to love everyone. Also the Samaritans. Or for us today, also the Arabs. Jesus taught that it is no great sign of wisdom if we only love those who love us back. Or to love only those who are similar to us. Wisdom is to also love the one who is different, strange, - even our enemy who does not love us. This is not a political statement but rather a theological explanation of God's character. God loves everyone. He created us: Jews, Arabs and every other nation. Also today, we need to distinguish between the person and his ideology. For example, we do not doubt that Islam cultivates diabolical ideas that are wrong and that we need to reject. But Jesus taught that we need to love everyone: Muslims, Hindus, atheists, everyone... since we were all created in God's image. The point that Jesus was making in this parable was that God dislikes the different classes, the elitism and the religions that we, humanity, create. And that we need to relate to and love everyone equally, even focusing on the weak, the less educated, those who are rejected and different.

YESHUA PRACTICED WHAT HE PREACHED.

Jesus despised the fact that men were giving themselves elevated status in the name of God. He couldn't stand the way people revered and kissed the hands of the religious leaders, and he had no time for the lie that money could buy access to heaven. Jesus emphasized relationships; the way we relate to the ones around us. The same goes for today. Whoever reads the newspaper can see how well religion and money go hand in hand together. Rabbis, priests and other religious leaders shamelessly sell salvation, talismans, prayers and blessings for money - a lot of money - usually from the poor and the desperate. Jesus, however, not only taught a different way with words, but he also practiced what he preached. He loved simple ones; those who had been rejected and disregarded by the religious establishment.

The Messiah gave not only two denarii on our behalf, but he gave the most valuable thing of all - his own life - so that we might live.

The man in the parable of the Good Samaritan was stripped, beaten up and left to die. So too we stripped Jesus, not only of his clothes, but also of his glory. We beat him and left him to die. But in the death of the righteous Messiah, we, the sinners, received forgiveness and absolution. Jesus gave us the perfect example for the command "*And you should love your neighbor as yourself*", by giving his own life for us, his neighbors. He taught that: "*Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends*" (John 15:13).

HE ALSO PUT THIS
TEACHING IN PRACTICE.

Which way is better? Now, ask yourselves the following question: Would the world be a better place to live in according to Rambam's interpretation, a world where each one loves and cares only for the one who thinks, acts and believes the way he does?

Or, according to Jesus' interpretation, a world where everyone brings sacrifices and loves not only foreigners that we don't know, but even our enemies.



Chapter 38

The Untold Reason Jewish People Do not Believe Jesus is the Messiah!

*"What if Jesus is the best kept secret in Judaism,
purposely hidden behind a closed door from the people?"*

Hundreds of years after the time of Jesus, a legend in the Talmud portrayed Jesus as a false messiah, a sorcerer, who led the people of Israel astray and seduced them into idolatry. For almost 2000 years, this myth went unchallenged and was blindly accepted. No one dared question the wisdom of the Sages in this matter. Truly, this brainwashing works so well that pretty much every Jew has come to believe that it is ok to believe in anything - except for Jesus. But what if there is something that they didn't bother to mention? What if the real reason that the Rabbis rejected Jesus is being hidden from you? What if Jesus is the best kept secret in Judaism, purposely hidden behind a closed door from the people?

The exclusivity that the Rabbis created for themselves with their tradition is well known. This is nothing new, and the situation was already like that 2,000 years ago. Jesus was the only one who dared to stand up against this religious oppression by breaking down the walls rabbinical tradition had put up. Jesus opened the door to God for everyone. Today, thanks to Jesus, millions of Gentiles from all over the world, from different cultures and countries, believe in the God of Israel and find a future, hope, comfort, joy and everlasting life in the very same Jew who lived in Israel, 2,000 years ago.

**THE ACTUAL REASON JESUS WAS REJECTED
BY THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF HIS TIME:**

Contrary to the rabbinical explanation, the New Testament gospels explain that the actual reason they rejected Jesus as Messiah was due to the power-hungry corruption of the religious leadership. **Jesus presented a threat to their convoluted, self-serving religious system.** They were fixated on control, power, and making money at the expense of the people. Jesus threatened the exclusivity of their sect which they had created. They knew that if the people of Israel accepted and followed Jesus, they'd lose their power, their influence, their control, their honored position and of course, their source of income.

BUT HOW CAN ANYONE BE SURE WHO WAS RIGHT?

It's actually not that hard at all when the morals of either side are compared. First, let's go back 2,000 years in time. While the religious leaders were busy coming up with legalistic traditions and rules, isolating their people from the world and disregarding the Gentiles, Jesus talked about grace, modesty, compassion and love. While the rabbis were busy with oppressing and intimidating the people making them view God as some kind of moral monster who only wants to punish, Jesus talked openly about the fact that all need the love and forgiveness of God. He talked about forgiveness based on God's grace and compassion, not our own human attempts to impress him with all kinds of ceremonies and habits. Where others threw stones, Jesus forgave. While others blamed the poor for their own suffering, Jesus deliberately spent time with outcasts, willingly listened to their troubles, healed lepers and ate with the families of the rejected ones. Where others only saw prostitutes, tax collectors and uneducated fishermen, Jesus saw a group of people with the potential to change the world.

Like every religion, rabbinic tradition cultivates the idea that God only cares about the members of their own sect and hates the rest of the world. They want to make all of Israel believe that God cares only about Jews. In fact, for 2,000 years the rabbis have been claiming that it's only the Jews who are important to God, and that he doesn't care about Gentiles - that they are not important and that their purpose lies in serving the Jews.

But Jesus stood up against the claim that a group of people can exist who are better or more important in God's eyes than other people. Whether they're rabbis or popes, Jesus and the New Testament calls them to show love, grace and compassion, mercy and peace among all people. This threatened the tactics of religious intimidation and oppression used to maintain superiority.

AND WHAT ABOUT YOU? ARE YOU OFFENDED BY JESUS' SAYINGS?

Like this one: *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God... Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..."* (Matthew Chap. 5, NT).

Or how about this request from the NT: *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another..."* (Epistle to the Ephesians, Chap. 4, NT).

DOES THAT REALLY SOUND SO BAD?

Whoever has the courage to read the New Testament will notice that Jesus was gentle, modest, sensitive, compassionate, loving and showed great kindness and compassion. But what did make him angry was the use of God's name in vain and the religious oppression exerted by the rabbis of his time. They were coming up with rules, habits, ceremonies and strange traditions that they forced upon the people, claiming that they were God's will. They took power for themselves and controlled the people by spreading fear, and by economically intimidating those who followed them. And all this was done in God's name.

SOUND FAMILIAR?

Power corrupts. Many of the rabbis of the Sanhedrin and the priests of Jesus' time were hypocritical, corrupt, liars, and thieves. This is a historically verifiable fact. Their deeds, done in God's name, were in

contradiction to the Old Testament. But Jesus was not the only one who had seen what was going on. For example, reading what Josephus writes on the matter (a Jewish historian at the time of the second temple) it becomes apparent that it was a dark time of political corruption and wickedness. The appointments of the high priest were no longer based on lineage but had become purely political, based on power and manipulation. The temple had become a marketplace. When they noticed that Jesus could perform miracles in the name of the God of Israel and that they could not, they became jealous and feared losing their position. They did not want to lose their power and control over the people of Israel. They did not want to lose their honorable positions and the respect they received from the masses.

They knew that if the people of Israel were to follow Jesus, the Messiah, they would lose everything. This anticipated catastrophe has been carefully avoided by the rabbis for 2,000 years and for that same fear of losing everything, the religious leaders of rabbinic Judaism still reject Jesus and the fact that he's the Messiah to this day.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, dated to the Second Temple period, also contain severe criticisms against the corrupt leaders of Judaism of that time. This might be hard to believe, but even the Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 57, admits and decisively attacks the corruption among the priestly families in Israel at the time of Jesus.

In a lecture on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Professor Rachel Elior of Hebrew University stated that the discovery of these scrolls in the Judean Desert provided proof of the poor condition the temple priesthood was in. According to Elior, scrolls written by the Sadducean priesthood describe how they had to flee for their lives and hide from the new priests who replaced them by force. In Professor Elior's opinion, when we find references to a war between "Sons of Light" and "Sons of Darkness" in the scrolls, the term "Sons of Darkness" refers to those corrupt priests who caused the spiritual decay and the destruction of the temple.

According to the book of Numbers, chapter 20, the priesthood was supposed to be passed on from father to son, and the high priest ministered until the day of his death. However, according to the Encyclopaedia

Hebraica, the spiritual leadership in Israel during the Second Temple period was so corrupt that the appointment of the high priest was controlled by a group of rich and privileged priestly families from which most of the priests came. According to Tractate Yoma 8 and 9, the high priests did not legitimately inherit the role as prescribed in the Bible, but used their money to buy this position of power from the political rulers, and took turns every year. In other words, the Sages themselves admit that the spiritual leadership at Jesus' time was corrupt. They used to harass the people without mercy. The way the New Testament writings describe the level of corruption that the rabbis and priests had reached during the Second Temple period is backed up by historical sources including the Talmud itself.

THIS IS WHAT JESUS FOUGHT AGAINST.

Because of this corruption, Jesus was rejected by the religious leaders. It's important to understand that just as the prophets did in the Old Testament, one of the tasks of the Messiah was to point out the sins of the religious leaders, rebuke them and unmask them before the people. So is it really that surprising that they rejected and killed him? But gladly enough, God is an expert in turning the bitter into sweet. He used the rejection and the death of the Messiah to bring about healing and forgiveness. Just like the sacrifice on the altar offered in the temple for the sins of the people, the Messiah's once-and-for-all sacrifice takes away our sin: Not just Israel's sins but the sins of the whole world. The blood that was shed for our sin has made a New Covenant.

Rabbi Isaac Liechtenstein, an important Hungarian rabbi of the twentieth century, was willing to swim against the tide. Though it was forbidden, he dared to read the New Testament. These are his words:

"I used to think that the New Testament is an unclean book, a source of pride selfishness, hate, antisemitism and violence. But when I opened this book, I felt it capture my heart in a special and wonderful way. All of a sudden glory and light filled my soul. I was looking for thorns, but I found

roses, pearls instead of stones, I found love instead of hate. Instead of revenge, I found forgiveness. Liberty, instead of slavery”.

AMAZING RIGHT?

When a Rabbi shows courage instead of blindly following the habit of rejecting the Messiah and reads the New Testament with an open heart, his life changes completely. He does not try anymore to force rules and odd traditions on people as if we could impress God by doing so. Rather, he understands that the peace which the Messiah came to give is first of all internal, for only in this way can our relationship with God be restored.

To sum it up: Since the corrupt religious leaders of Jesus' time did not want to lose their power and control, they had no choice but to reject God's Messiah and get rid of him. However, God used these events to bring a perfect sacrifice, providing forgiveness and atonement for the whole world. Thanks to the Messiah, this good news is not meant to be exclusive but is spreading throughout all the nations of the earth. The Jewish Messiah became a blessing to the Gentiles. This God who created, upholds, and loves all of his creation, loves each one of us so much that he revealed himself in the person of the Messiah, and gave his life for Jews and Gentiles alike.



Chapter 39

What's the Deal With Jesus Anyway?

What is it about him that captured our hearts and the hearts of many others?

Some rabbis accuse Messianic Jews of “grazing in foreign fields” - of wandering off into the ways of the Gentiles - but they are forgetting that Jesus was a Jew who was born in Israel. Is it not strange that 2,000 years after Jesus walked in the land of Israel, Israelis and the entire world are still talking about him? Jesus divided history into two: The era before he came and the era after, as your hand bears witness every time you write the date.

Jesus never wrote a book, but there have been more books written about him than any person the world has ever known. There was no social networking, no YouTube, and no internet 2,000 years ago. And yet the arrival of Jesus is still the most viral event in world. What is it about him that captured our hearts and the hearts of many others?

The New Testament, which describes Jesus’ life and ministry, has been translated into approximately 1,500 languages and dialects. Every year, close to 50 million copies of the New Testament are printed. Not a single painting, song, poem, or musical piece was penned by Jesus, yet his life and the words he spoke were the inspiration for more paintings, songs, poems and movies than any other figure in history. The famous artist, Van Gogh said:

“Jesus, an artist greater than all other artists, made neither paintings nor did he compose, but he announced in a loud voice and turned the mortal into immortal”.

Jesus never led an army, he didn’t live in a fancy palace and he had no military empire or any kind of official leadership position. Despite the obvious opportunity to compete with inferior religious constructs, he didn’t

even aspire to establish a new religion. Yet millions of people throughout history, and also today, see him as the sole purpose for their lives and are inspired to imitate the way he lived. Many were impressed by Jesus' words and by the miracles and wonders that he performed. After his crucifixion, it was expected that his disciples would scatter and disappear quickly, but the opposite happened: Instead of being beaten down with shame and depression, his disciples were filled with energy and enthusiastically spoke about their faith in him as the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. After his death and resurrection, he appeared to them, safe and sound, and it was also documented that he appeared to thousands of others throughout Israel.

When his Jewish disciples began performing supernatural signs and wonders in his name in full view of all the people, the authorities and religious leaders feared that their power was being undermined, and began to persecute and kill them. These Messianic Jews who were following Jesus were later joined by Gentiles who also came to believe in him, and they eventually outnumbered the Jewish believers.

Initially, the Messianic Jews were well-liked by the people. The Jewish historian Josephus commends Jesus and his disciples for their concern for others, their good deeds and for their high level of morality (*Antiquities*, 18.63). But this didn't convince the religious and political leaders who were concerned for their positions and so tried (unsuccessfully) to silence Jesus' disciples. Despite the persecutions and the threats, Jesus' message continued to gather momentum until it reached the ends of the earth. His message was revolutionary; Jesus was a breath of fresh air in Judaism. His message was not religious. He didn't pressure people to find favor in God's eyes by doing works out of fear or force, but he encouraged people and demonstrated a mighty kind of love. He spoke about grace and forgiveness – about God's love for all who were created in His image, both Jews and Gentiles. As civil rights activist, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., wrote: "Love has within it a redemptive power; the kind of power that eventually transforms individuals... and this is why Jesus says 'love your enemies'.... Hate doesn't allow your enemy to retract; hate is destructive to the one being hated and is destructive to the hater."

Jesus presented a vision opposite to that of the religious people of his time – envisioning a world in which all people are treated fairly and equally and lived together in peace: masters and slaves (so to speak), men and women, Jews and Gentiles. He cast a vision of a society in which every act comes from a place of mutual respect, a society that is driven by consideration and love for one another. Jesus called this “The Kingdom of God.”

This Kingdom would become an objective reality during his second coming, but Jesus calls his disciples to embrace him to the degree that the values of this Kingdom are reflected in their daily lives. Would you be willing to sacrifice your life for such a vision? Jesus’ disciples responded positively, because up to that point they hadn’t met another person like Jesus. He had exceptional powers, and the words that came out of his mouth, along with the miracles he performed, had penetrated their hearts and stirred up hope in their soul – hope for eternal life.

Jesus was genuinely interested in people. He wanted to connect and develop relationships with them. Even (in fact, especially) with the kind of people who most of us want nothing to do with: lepers, tax-collectors, the homeless, prostitutes, the poor, the rejected, and anyone who was in some kind of trouble or another. He stood by the weak whom society had already condemned, he healed the sick and claimed that he had the power to forgive sins. His friendship forever and deeply changed the lives of those who accepted him with an open heart. For his disciples, who had frequently been witnesses to his love for others, there was no going back. They were willing to die for him and for his message.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT JEWS WERE THE FIRST TO BELIEVE IN JESUS.

At the beginning, all of the believers in Jesus were Jewish and today there are more Messianic Jewish believers than ever before in history. The prevailing view among both Jewish and Christian historians is that initially, when Jesus was physically in Israel, all of his followers were Jews and that during the first years after his death and resurrection, many thousands of Jews believed in him (Acts 21:20). In fact, back then, the question that was

being asked was, “Can you be Gentile and follow Jesus, the Jewish Messiah?”

It's impossible to place Jesus in the same category as the rest of the humanity's philosophers. Therefore, it is important that you take time to consider your answer regarding the question of Jesus' identity. Jesus said: *“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends”* (John 15:13). Love is the reason Jesus did the noblest act of all for his friends, for you and for me; he gave his heart and soul and his life for us! And that is why, since that day and until today, Jews like us lovingly accept Jesus and his message.



Chapter 40

8 Ways Jesus Changed the World for You!

"This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammad, and Napoleon; without science and learning, shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times." - Professor Philip Schaff c. 17th. Century

Most people take the Western culture into which they were born for granted, without questioning where it came from, or how it developed. Many are quick to blame strict rabbinic Judaism, and rightfully so, for barring access to the modern world: to technology, core studies, and so on. The reason behind this rabbinical resistance is that Western culture represents the one whom the rabbis hate most of all: Jesus.

Look at any positive human activity in today's culture and with few exceptions its roots were developed by the disciples of the most famous rabbi in the world, Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) and his teachings from the Bible. All throughout history, bad people have taken God's words out of context, twisting their meaning and using them to serve their own selfish agendas - the horrific slave trade in America is an example. But it would be wrong of us to blame such things on the Bible itself. Why? Since Western culture was established on Biblical principles, without the Bible, today's culture wouldn't exist.

In their book “Literature Through the Eyes of Faith”, researchers Gallagher and Lundin, write concerning the New Testament that:

“The Bible is one of the most important documents in the history of civilization, not only because of its status as holy inspired Scripture, but also because of its pervasive influence on Western thought. As the predominant world view for at least fourteen centuries, Christianity and its great central text played a major role in the formation of Western culture. Consequently, many literary texts, even those in our post-Christian era, frequently draw on the Bible.”

Presented here for the reader’s consideration are eight ways that illustrate how the advanced enlightenment of the modern era originated in Jesus.

1. ART

In ancient times, art was used mainly to praise and glorify kings and rulers. But since the time of Jesus, art became public property. In fact, since the beginning of history, no book has inspired so many pieces of art as the Bible has, from classical music compositions to the most famous paintings in any museum in the world. It cannot be denied that there is no competition to the literary influence of Jesus’ words and the New Testament, whether in paintings, in songs, in drama and all areas of art.

Professor Fish from Bar-Ilan University says that the New Testament writings gave authors since the Middle Ages onwards, “many symbols, ideas, and a unique perspective on reality, more than any other composition, whether ancient or from our time. This influence expressed itself not only in compositions directly related to characters or subjects from the Holy Scriptures, but also in countless compositions, songs and theater productions that are not dealing directly with the Bible, but support its views on civilization and the world.”

By the way, even the very first radio station in Israel, “Kol Yerushalyim” Radio (Voice of Jerusalem), was started by a group of

Anglican Christians and Messianic Jews, and the pioneers of photography in Israel were also Messianic Jews.

2. MEDICINE, RESEARCH & SCIENCE.

During the time of Jesus, under the rule of the Roman Empire, Greek philosophy reigned supreme. They believed that there was no real value to our bodies, or to matter in general, and that only ideas and thoughts held real value. In contrast, Jesus taught (based on the Hebrew Scriptures) that our physical body *is* important, because it was created in the image of God, and that the quality of our individual lives matters. Thanks to that viewpoint, the fields of medicine and science flourished wherever his followers went. In fact, most of the first scientists in history were spiritual people who believed the Bible to be the Word of God and Jesus to be the Messiah. It was on their shoulders that modern science was raised.

Here are a few examples: Founder of the Big Bang Theory, Professor Georges Lemaître; founder of the Scientific Method, Francis Bacon; founder of Modern Rationalism, René Descartes; renowned physicist, Galileo Galilei; formulator of the Laws of Attraction, Sir Isaac Newton; one of the founders of the Theory of Astronomy, Nicolaus Copernicus; founder of Kepler's Laws, Johannes Kepler; Blaise Pascal, who laid out foundations for geometry; among the founders of Electromagnetic Theory, Michael Faraday; Father of modern genetics, Gregor Mendel; among the fathers of Quantum Theory, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics, Max Planck; and Father of Microbiology, Louis Pasteur.

By the way, the first hospital in Israel was founded in 1884 in Jerusalem by a Messianic Jewish doctor who brought a group of Anglican Christians from Great Britain. Together with them, he built the first hospital in the Old City in Jerusalem and called it the "Jewish Hospital". It was those early pioneers, believers in Jesus, who introduced modern medicine to Israel, equipped it and taught it free of charge!

3. ENVIRONMENTALISM

The Greeks taught that matter has no importance and that people should exploit nature's resources to satisfy their own desires. In contrast, Jesus taught that there *is* importance to the physical and material world because it was created by God as a blessing, so therefore, it is important to preserve and enhance the environment. Based on this teaching of Jesus, 2,000 years later, what is known today as Environmentalism had a beginning.

4. CAUSALITY

While Greek philosophy preached that history is circular with no direction or purpose, Jesus, in agreement with the biblical prophets, taught that there *is* a purpose, a direction, and a general plan to historical events. The Bible lays out God's plans from beginning to end, giving many prophecies of events to come. Millions of people are standing on a great example of this today: the existence of the modern State of Israel is a result of God's stated plans and biblical prophecies reaching their fulfillment, a subject that was touched on much earlier in the chapter entitled "The Pierced Messiah - Zechariah 12:10".

5. THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION

At the time of Jesus, both Greek philosophy and the religious leaders of Israel claimed that only society, state, or tribe were important, suppressing the individual's opinion and voice. Jesus, social justice warrior of his time, taught that it was not only the voices of high-powered and influential men that should count, but that each and every person is important in God's eyes. He treated the opinions and feelings of the sinner, the weak, the needy and the rejected as equally important and deserving of respect. Jesus did not allow the religious leaders of his time to crush the weak. He demonstrated this in action by sitting down and dining with the sinners and outcasts of society. Based on Jesus' example, what is known today as Human Rights was developed, including freedom of speech. The democracy of the Western countries are based on Jesus' teachings. Look at the difference between the Western Christian countries and the Muslim countries and it's clear how far-reaching was Jesus' influence on freedom of speech (even when, at times, it is taken advantage of).

6. MODERN JUSTICE

Greek Philosophy taught that there was no real value to a person's choices or actions since everything was in the hands of fate, which ultimately decides every outcome. In complete contrast, Jesus taught from the Bible that our choices matter and that every decision or every thought, including the smallest ones, may have far-reaching consequences. We have the ability to build or to be useful, or to hurt, destroy or to annihilate. Every person carries on his or her shoulders the full responsibility for his/her actions, and one day we will be required to give an account to God for everything we have done. This is what the modern justice system is based upon. And this is undeniably the reason why in courtrooms and in movies the well-known expression is displayed: "In God we trust".

7. PSYCHOLOGY

While both the rabbis and Greek Philosophy taught that feelings and emotions should be suppressed, Jesus taught that mankind was created in the likeness of God and therefore human feelings do not exist by mistake - rather, they are healthy, essential, positive and important and they need to be guided and understood. Based on this teaching by Jesus, what is known today as "psychology" was developed. Entire concepts in psychology can be traced to verses in the New Testament. For example, in ancient days, crying was considered shameful and looked at as a weakness, but in the New Testament, Jesus is not only described as crying several times, but He even commands his followers: "*Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*" The better way is to identify not only with those who are joyful, but also with those who suffer, and to suffer with them, in order to comfort them. This way of thinking is so basic that, thanks to Jesus, most people today take it for granted.

8. THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The shameful status of women in rabbinic Judaism was detailed a few chapters earlier. More could have been said on that with quotes from established historians but it doesn't take a great historian to know the

degradation women have suffered in religion and in ancient times in general. When the Pharisees (rabbis of Jesus' time) caught a woman in an act of adultery they wanted to stone her to death at Jesus' feet. But Jesus demonstrated God's grace and love in an extraordinary way. In that chapter, the rabbis brought the adulterous woman to Jesus in order to test him and to see if he would agree to have her killed according to the law. Jesus urged the one without any sin in his life to throw the first stone. He defused the situation peacefully, and in the process, taught them a lesson about God's love and forgiveness.

This is the love of God that appeared to us in the image of the Messiah, so that we might have a perfect role model and source of inspiration in every aspect of life - for our physical needs as well as our spiritual needs. Jesus changed the lives of those who chose to follow him: he gave them a hope and a future and renewed their hearts, minds and spirits, so that they can be a blessing to those around them, and he changes hearts today. He gave up his majesty and honor - even his own life - for us imperfect people, so that we can join him in giving, building, encouraging and creating within the society in which we live.

Jesus the Messiah is the example, the role model and the perfection for our entire human experience.



Chapter 41

What was the purpose of the Torah (Moses' Law)?

“If the ‘finger is pointed’ at a man’s wife about another man, but she is not caught sleeping with the other man, she shall jump into the river for her husband.” (Law Code of Hammurabi 132)

Whoever reads the Law of Moses might discern that a strong similarity exists between the laws of Moses and other ancient laws of the nations surrounding the people of Israel. This goes to show that the laws of Moses didn't just appear out of nowhere, but were based on existing principles and laws with which the people of Israel were already familiar, such as: Mesopotamia's Code of Ur-Nammu, Sumerian's Lipit-Ishtar, Acadian's Ashnuna, Babylonian Hammurabi, The laws of the Hittites, and so on.

WHY ARE THESE LAWS SO SIMILAR TO THE LAW OF MOSES (TORAH)?

For two reasons:

First, every culture on earth has to maintain some sort of order by having authorities and administrators making rules and decisions, in order to deal with thieves, murderers or rebels... Or in other words, we are all dealing with the same human heart – a corrupted heart that loves to get revenge and rebel. Man needs laws and boundaries, otherwise if everyone just did as they pleased, we would be stabbing one another over parking places.

Second:

God graciously met the nation of Israel exactly where they were at morally. Which was not a great place, it has to be said. And from there, He slowly pulled Israel out of their moral mire. Slowly, God lifted his chosen people up from the low morality of the surrounding idol-worshiping cultures to a clearly defined morality on a higher level, by limiting behaviors and forms of punishment. But together with that, God also began teaching Israel about forgiveness, grace and mercy - concepts that were not so common back then. For example, while the Egyptian and Hammurabi laws demanded that body parts such as hands, tongues, noses, breasts or ears should be cut off as punishment, the Law of Moses under similar circumstances limited the judgment to a maximum punishment of no more than 40 lashes – only in extreme circumstances. But thanks to God, the people have moved on from there. Very gradually, God presented new revelations to his people and the levels of morality and ethics rose accordingly.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT
THE PERFECT IDEAL FOR GOD
WAS NOT THE LAW OF MOSES.

Those commandments were a temporary measure, profoundly compromising God's ideal standards of morality to much lower levels. What then is God's ideal? God's ideal of perfection appears in the first two chapters of Genesis before Adam and Eve rebelled. The Law of Moses was just the first step by which God could take all of Israel out of the moral mire they were in. This was God's grace, reaching out to corrupted human hearts living in a dark and evil world. God put boundaries in place limiting the ancient way of life in which rape, slavery and revenge were socially acceptable at the time.

TAKE FOR EXAMPLE THE WAY IN WHICH
GOD LIMITED REVENGE.

As is the case in some cultures today, and more so in the past, it was normal to get vengeance. Joseph took out your eye? Get revenge! Take both of his! But the Law of Moses limited it: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." The law wasn't just teaching Israel about proportional measures,

equality and justice, but it was also creating a limit – you can't take both of Joseph's eyes in revenge any longer. You got in a fight with Joseph again? And this time you knocked out his tooth? Good news! He is not allowed to kill you in revenge.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE IS THE WAY GOD TONES DOWN THE BRUTAL TREATMENT OF SLAVES.

The people of Israel were used to harsh treatment as slaves in Egypt so that's how they then treated their own slaves, beating them without mercy - sometimes even to death. God set limits so that whoever felt they must punish their slave, they had to make sure the slave was in good shape to go back to work after a day. Again, these commandments, these laws of Moses are absolutely NOT God's ideal, NOT his standard of morality, but merely the first step to pull the people of Israel out of the moral swamp they were living in and around.

GOD'S ULTIMATE STANDARD FROM THE START WAS NO SLAVES AND NO REVENGE.

Step by step, God pulled his people up out of the mud, until 1500 years later in the New Testament, Jesus the Messiah presented once again the ultimate standard of God.

Using the institution of marriage as an example. *“Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?’ ‘Haven’t you read,’ he replied, ‘that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate”* (Matthew 19:3-6).

Jesus explained what God's ideal was from the start: Marriage is a lifelong commitment in contrast with the Rabbinic Halacha (laws). You don't just throw your wife away because she's no longer beautiful to you as she was in her youth, or separate from her because she's ill. You are

obligated to her and she is to you, until death. But the rabbis and Pharisees tested Jesus:

“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard [wicked]. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” (Matthew 19:7-9).

Back then, men would divorce their wives for virtually any reason. The Torah took into account that the woman was in a weaker position than the man and so there's a need to protect her rights... especially in ancient times. The Law of Moses set limitations on the husband - divorce was just for unfaithfulness. But God's original, perfect standard appears much earlier in Genesis 2, which is exactly the passage that Jesus recited to the rabbis who were testing him: *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”* (Genesis 2:24).

In God's eyes the ideal for marriage is that a man and a woman change from being two different people and become one flesh. Jesus explained to the rabbis, *“Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard [wicked].”* In other words, Moses' Law was a compromise on God's ideal due to the hardness of the human heart.

Jesus also rebuked them because they hadn't even understood the Law of Moses which only permitted divorce for adultery or unfaithfulness. Rabbinic Halacha permits a man to divorce his wife if her cooking isn't tasty enough, if the distance between her breasts is too large or for any selfish reason. Jesus was talking to all those who trampled on and ignored the boundaries given in the Law on this matter as he said, *“Anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matthew 5:19). That is to say, if someone decides to ignore these boundaries and do whatever they want like throw out the wife because she got fat, or steal when no one's

looking, or stab someone over a parking spot... in God's eyes, they're the least. They'll end up last.

JESUS REVEALS GOD'S ULTIMATE STANDARD

Is it enough not to cheat on your wife? Jesus said, "*But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*" (Matthew 5:28).

Remember the laws about revenge? "*You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth. ' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.*" (Matthew 5:38-39).

In other words, is it alright to get revenge on someone who did you wrong? **Better to forgive.** Otherwise it will turn into an endless cycle of bloodshed and the bitterness will eat a person up inside. Darkness can't drive out darkness. Peace will not come by hating and getting revenge, but by forgiveness and grace.

The commandments of Moses are not able and are not supposed to change the heart, but to limit the selfishness and evil within it. The Law is like a fence that comes up against the sinful nature and limits behavior. The Law prevents evil inclinations from harming others. Just like putting an animal with rabies in a cage to make sure it won't harm others, the cage is only temporary, to prevent the animal from harming others... but the cage won't cure the animal. The antidote, the remedy, is the Messiah. The Messiah came to change and renew the human heart and when a person has been cured, they no longer need to be in the cage.



Chapter 42

Why are the Torah's Commandments so Cruel?

*Capital punishment by stoning!?
By hanging!? By burning at the stake!?*

Sometimes, to the modern reader, the maximum penalties in the Old Testament seem cruel, barbaric or primitive. Conversely, the present day system of punishment in western society would be regarded as weak, too soft and ridiculous in the eyes of those living in the ancient Middle East. During the time of the Old Testament no one took laws and regulations seriously unless the breaking of those laws was punished by death. Just remember, this is a time where parents would burn and eat their own kids. Who hasn't seen articles about too soft sentences of only a few months in prison for people who destroyed somebody else's life as a result of rape or something similar? The reactions often sound like this: "A crime like that should be punishable by death so that in the future others wouldn't dare." People learn from examples: bad examples, sad to say, and happily some good examples.

Let's consider the example of the Israeli shoe-thrower. Some years ago, during an Israeli court session, a man threw one of his shoes over the judge's head. The severity of the punishment he received surprised the whole nation: "Three years in prison for the one throwing his shoe beyond Dorit Beinisch. 'Such an incident must not occur ever again. Thus, to make an example (that they would see and fear) the severest possible punishment is applicable...' - Judge Feinberg about his decision." Modern legislation took this principle, "that they may see and fear," from the Old Testament. "*That they may see and know, may consider and understand...*" (Isaiah 41:20).

Thus, the highest penalties in the Bible are severe so that those barbarians without culture would “see and fear.” Israel’s lifestyle was very much influenced by the cultures and nations around them. And therefore, the laws of the Bible were given in a historical, cultural and social context. God did not create a people for himself out of nothing, on a tabula rasa (blank slate). Rather, he took a group of people whose style of relationships, behavior, and ways of relating to each other were all influenced by foreign, perverse and barbaric cultures that - as will be seen later on - were especially evil and cruel.

How did things get so bad in the first place? Keep reading for a closer look; but first, a little introduction. After the creation of the world things went bad very fast. Adam and Eve failed their first mission. Instead of ruling over creation, the snake, representing Satan the deceiver and seducer, seized authority over them when he managed to incite them to rebel against God. As a result, God, who until then had walked with them in the Garden of Eden, had to cast them out. The following chapters in Genesis continue to describe humanity’s decline. In those pages, we read of the first murder and the increase of evil within man’s heart. It comes to a peak during Noah’s time. God wipes out most of humanity and starts anew. This should teach everyone that the human race is the problem, and the cause for the evil in the world.

The effect of pagan traditions. Today’s rabbinic tradition has taken on all kinds of habits, ceremonies and pagan traditions, like prostrating on graves, talismans, the Hamsa, the lighting of candles, reincarnation, astrology, fortunes and more. In the exact same way, other pagan traditions were passed on to the Jewish nation because of contact with other people groups in ancient times. So the people of Israel subconsciously picked up a lot of pagan traditions.

A hero appears in the narrative: Noah. But then he also fails. And a new cycle of humanity’s decline starts, which arrives at its climax in the tower of Babel. This time, God decides to disperse the people. And in walks another main character. **This time it’s Abraham.** God’s covenant with Abraham is a turning point in the Old Testament story. Until then, there was only decline. But now, Abraham and his descendants succeed and prosper.

And God decides to bless Abraham and gives him the promise that blessing will come to all peoples and nations from one of his descendants.

It is through this promised descendant of Abraham that the solution for our depraved morality will come. He will be the one to fix the problem of the human heart: its sin and rebellion. The prophets and kings expected him, hoped for and prophesied about him, the one who in all of the Old Testament received different titles and names. Today, we know him as “the Messiah.” The Messiah will be the greatest of all: greater than the forefathers, and greater than Moses. The Sages also upheld this when they said: “All the prophets prophesied about nothing else but the Messiah.”

Ancient codes of conduct: As discussed in the previous chapter, whoever reads the laws of the Torah will notice strong similarities between the law of Moses and the laws of other ancient nations that surrounded the people of Israel. This proves that the law of Moses did not come to Israel out of nowhere. Rather, God gave the laws of the Torah which were similar to laws they were already familiar with. Among these were the laws of Ur-Nammu from Mesopotamia, the laws of Lipit-Ishtar of the Isin of Sumeria, the laws of the Acadian Eshnunna, Hammurabi of Babylon, and the codex of the Hittites. Every culture needs to deal with authority and judgment, theft, murder and revolt. In other words, they need to deal with the human heart - often a rotten heart that loves revenge and rebellion. Man needs laws and limits. If everyone ignores the rules and does whatever they want, we are capable of repeating the abuses of the ancients. Thankfully, society has come a long way since then. Step by step God continued to reveal and raise the bar on morals and ethical standards on how we relate to each other, how wives are to be treated and so forth.

Emphasizing God's ultimate moral standard, Jesus referred to all those who dishonor and ignore the limits of the law when he said: “*Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven...*” (Matthew 5:19).

The law of Moses: The law of Moses cannot change the human heart, nor was that ever its purpose. The law of Moses can only hold back the

selfishness and evil that is in the heart. The law of Moses was only the first step in pulling the human race out of the moral, pagan and idol-worshiping swamp, by limiting punishments, revenge, exploitation, brutality and humiliation. In other words, it put us in quarantine. But Jesus the Messiah fulfilled the mission. He presented the antidote, the answer to the problem of the human heart and taught the ultimate morals of God: Grace, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, sensitivity, empathy, thoughtfulness, pardon, generosity, and the most extreme expression of love - self-sacrifice for the sake of others. God expressed his love not just with nice words. He acted. And just like God walking with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he is walking with all true believers in the character of the Messiah, bringing things to a full circle. He gave an example of God's love.

THE BLAMELESS MESSIAH GAVE HIMSELF AS A PERFECT SACRIFICE. THAT'S PERFECT LOVE.

Take the following illustration: Think of a dirt road that with the passage of time was turned into a gravel road and eventually became a highway. When it was still a dirt road you could only walk on it. But when it became a gravel road you could travel on it with chariots pulled by horses or donkeys. And in the end, after becoming a highway, people can travel on it in fast vehicles. The rough road is like the Sinai Covenant, the basic laws of the Torah. Through his word and his prophets, God has revealed so much more of his heart, his mind and his plans since that time. His Messiah came to teach and demonstrate God's ways; his original ideal. Now, striving to go back under the more primitive laws of Moses' time is like traveling on a major highway, riding a donkey. Whether you are trying to follow the ABCs of rabbinic tradition or Muslim Sharia law the time has come to move on.

To sum things up: God raised up for himself a nation. The people of Israel were a people stuck in a swamp when it came to morals and society and were deeply influenced by the immorality and cruelty of the pagan nations around them. God met them where they were and gave them the law of Moses to slowly get them out of that swamp, to bring them out of the dark into the light... up until the incomparable climax, the coming of the Messiah. Just look around you and see the laws of the well-advanced nations in the west, like the US and countries in Europe: they are all

founded on the teachings and acts of Jesus and the writings of the New Testament.

In Israel, there are those who insist on living in the past. And there are those who have moved on and adopted the progress and enlightenment that Jesus brought into this world. What about you? Do you live in the traditions of the past? Or did you move on?



Chapter 43

The Talmud (rabbinic tradition) vs. The New Testament

Which of these is the true continuation of the Torah?

The rabbis and their followers often accuse believers in Yeshua the Messiah of disregarding the Torah while they themselves live according to its rules. They claim that the New Testament is a “poor imitation”, that rabbinical tradition is the original, and that whoever dares to read the New Testament will immediately stumble over quotations from the Hebrew scriptures - the Old Testament - the true original.

It's true that despite its small size (27 books containing 260 chapters) the New Testament contains almost 1,000 quotes from the Old Testament. In fact, more than 99% of the quotes from external texts are from the Old Testament. Just as the prophets taught based on the Torah, so the New Testament teachings are based on the books of the Old Testament - the Torah, Prophets and the Writings. In fact, without the Hebrew scriptures there would be no prophecies about a Messiah, and without those messianic prophecies the very messianism of Jesus is baseless. Therefore, the theology of the New Testament is based squarely on the theology of the Old Testament. Jesus and his disciples believed in the holiness of the Old Testament, quoted from it and referred to it. Jesus and his disciples regarded the Hebrew scriptures as God's word: written under the supervision and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

But what if the teaching favored by the rabbinic tradition was not actually the Torah of Moses at all? What if they just use the term “Torah of Moses” but actually they mean something completely different? Do not be deceived: Today it is simply impossible to keep the commandments of the Torah given at Sinai because the commandments of the Torah revolve

around the temple, the tabernacle, the priesthood, the altar and at the core of it all are the sacrifices that cover sins.

BUT THESE HAVE NOT EXISTED FOR 2000 YEARS.

Firstly

Almost all the commandments that Moses gave are closely tied to the service in the temple. Under the Mosaic covenant, the worship of God was carried out in the temple. Trying to live according to the Mosaic covenant these days without temple, tabernacle, the altar and the sacrifices is like trying to ride a bike without wheels.

Secondly

When the temple was destroyed, 2,000 years ago, the rabbis had to reinvent Judaism anew, so that it would function without the temple and the Holy of Holies. Though they kept using the terms “Judaism” and “Torah” they changed the definitions: no more biblical Judaism based on the Torah, but from then on it was the traditions of the Rabbis.

THE TEMPLE, THE PRIESTHOOD, THE ALTAR AND THE SACRIFICES WERE ALL REPLACED BY NEW CUSTOMS.

Most Jewish traditions have not come from the Bible, but have been taken from other people groups, among whom the Jewish people lived during times of exile: The wearing of a kippah/yarmulke, talismans, the Hamsa (hand-shaped charms), bar/bat mitzvahs, displaying pictures of famous rabbis, Rosh Hashanah, Lag b’Omer, lying prostrate on the graves of the famous rabbis, magic and the zodiac, séances and the belief in reincarnation, the kashrut laws of separating meat and dairy, lighting candles for shabbat, repeating mantras and even the tradition of breaking a wine glass at weddings. Of course, some are more innocent than others, but none of these beloved traditions are mentioned once in the Bible.

Even the wrapping of tefillin (phylacteries) and the kissing of mezuzahs have been contorted from the Biblical command to remember God’s laws to

become man-made mystical charms. God never asked for straps of leather or boxes on foreheads (certainly we never hear of a single Biblical character taking part in such a thing) but we do see similar practices in other cultures. Professor Menahem Haran of Hebrew University explains that they were originally developed as “magical figurative symbols” and that “the use of such amulets attached to the head or arm was customary in the ancient world”. Likewise, mezuzahs have taken on the role of a lucky charm to ward off evil. The Sages chose one or two words from a verse taken out of context and contrived a whole new meaning, based on pagan reliance on amulets.

Another clarification of terms: Note that the New Testament in Hebrew is not called “The New Torah” but “The New Covenant”. This term has its root in an OT-prophecy by Jeremiah about the making of a new covenant. One last time:

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 31:31-32). As explained earlier in “New Covenant Prophecy.”

The New Testament is the most natural continuation of the Old Testament, not only in light of fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah., but historians have to admit to an evident lack of connection between the Judaism of the Rabbis, reflected in the Talmud, and the Old Testament.

Consider what Israel’s greatest expert in the Sages’ literature has to say: Professor Avigdor Shinan from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a man who wears a Kippah himself:

“Our theology is not the theology of the Old Testament. The tradition that we follow today is not the tradition of the Old Testament, it’s the tradition of the Sages. Shabbat laws, kashrut laws, you name it, it’s not in the Scriptures, not in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, there is no

Synagogue no Kaddish, no Kol Nidre, no Bar Mitzvah, no Tallit. Everything that somebody would define as Jewish and look for its root; it's not the Old Testament it's the Sages' literature. That's where everything started. Where is Judaism in the Old Testament? Moses was not called a Jew. Abraham was not called a Jew. David, neither. Only Mordechai, 'Mordechai the Jew', and that's at the end of the Old Testament during the Persian time" (Professor A. Shinan).

It's worth repeating ... the famous Jewish orthodox writer Chaim Schimmel writes in his book "The Oral Torah": "Jews never lived according to the actual words written in the Torah, but according to the traditions of the rabbis".

The great irony here is that while the New Testament was written by Jews and describes the life of the Jewish Messiah, the rabbinic tradition on the other hand – the "Oral Law" was formulated by a Gentile descendant of Sisera who converted. They called him Rabbi Akiva. About 2000 years ago, the heroes of faith among Israel were biblical characters like Daniel, Noah, Deborah, Joseph, Solomon, and many more. However, today these have been replaced with characters like Rabbi Schneerson, Rabbi Akiva, Rabban Gamaliel, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yosef Mizrachi Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak, Rabbi Pinto, Rabbi Eliezer Berland and so on.

Who are the faithful ones? For those who insist that they faithfully keep the commandments of the Mosaic covenant, here's a little questionnaire for self examination. It contains some of the most basic commandments by which everyone can see if they REALLY keep the Torah:

Do you make sure there is no animal fat in your diet? Like it is written in Leviticus 3:16?

Will you stone your kids if they should curse you? As written in Leviticus 20:9?

Do you avoid shaving? As written in Leviticus 19:27?

Do you take homosexuals and kill them? As written in Leviticus 20:13?

When you buy clothes do you make sure they're not made out of "shatnez", a mixture of wool and linen? As written in Deuteronomy 22:11?

Do you make sure you go up to Jerusalem on the three pilgrimage feasts to bring your offering to the priests? As commanded in Exodus 23:14?

Those were just a few examples among hundreds of commandments that are even more complicated. Therefore, the answer to the question, "Why follow an imitation if we have the original?" is: "We agree!"

The New Testament is the natural continuation of the Old Testament. It shows the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and presents a description of the Messiah's life. In contrast, the Talmud abandoned the law of Israel and fabricated a new version to deal with the absence of the temple, and a Messiah they wished to avoid. The Judaism of rabbinic tradition which comes from the Talmud is not Jewish at all. Original Judaism, the first and true one, is the one described in the writings of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

After the destruction of the 2nd Temple, Israel was left with two main options:

- 1)** The Judaism of the New Testament, based on the Messiah Yeshua to whom the prophecies of the Old Testament pointed ...
- 2)** ... or the tradition of the Rabbis which stemmed from the sect of the Pharisees.

If you want to see which is the natural continuation of the Old Testament, just look at the content of how the New Testament opens, compared to the opening of the Talmud.

THE NEW TESTAMENT PICKS UP WHERE THE OLD TESTAMENT ENDS

Chronologically, the last book in the Old Testament is Malachi. Interestingly enough, Malachi chapters 3 to 4 start with the hope for a Messiah and end with the hope for a Messiah.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction” (Malachi 4:5-6).

Now let's look at how the New Testament begins. The first big event is the birth of John the Baptist. This is what the Angel Gabriel announced to his parents about John in Luke chapter 1:

“He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared” (verses 16-17).

Luke is not the opening of the New Testament - the majority of Bible scholars hold that the gospel of Mark of the New Testament was written first. It opens with the following words:

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight’” (Mark 1:1-3).

For comparison, look at the opening words of the Sages' writings, bearing in mind that Malachi closed out the Old Testament canon prophesying the coming of Elijah the prophet: The Mishna starts with the Berakhot, the blessings. It says:

“From when may one recite Shema in the evening? From the time when the priests go in to eat their Terumah, until the end of the first watch – so says Rabbi Eliezer. And the Sages say: Until midnight. Rabban Gamliel says: Until the break of dawn” (Berakhot 1:1).

The Talmud then launches into a detailed discussion about how to make sure you are saying the ritual prayers at the right time and in the correct way, to make sure that you are fulfilling your obligation, and keeping the rabbinic law.

Dear reader, **which of the two writings is the most natural and logical continuation of the Old Testament?** Which of the two gives an appropriate answer to the messianic hope with which the Old Testament ends? Do the closing words of Malachi 4:5-6 transition more smoothly to the coming of John the Baptist in the Gospels, or the discussion about times of prayer in the Talmud, Berakhot 1:1?

To sum things up: Do not be deceived! No one really keeps the commandments of the Mosaic Law. A new covenant has been given to the children of Israel and to the Rabbis. The new covenant that the Rabbis follow is the rabbinic tradition that they made up themselves. The New Covenant that Bible believers follow is grounded in God’s promised Messiah.

And what about you? Which covenant do you follow?



Chapter 44

The Twisted “Drash” Interpretations of the Rabbis

God’s covenant with Israel was in accordance with what was written.

The rabbis know that no matter what they say, those who believe in them will accept and follow their decrees, even if they are wrong or making things up. After all, the Talmud demands blind faith from its believers. An example of this can be found in the Tractate Sanhedrin 89, where the Sages say that even if a rabbi tells you that your right hand is actually your left hand, and of course, you know he is wrong... it doesn't matter. You are obliged to whatever the rabbi says. If a rabbi tells you to eat something which God forbids you, or even to kill a man whom you know is innocent, even then you are obliged to do as the rabbi commanded you. With this kind of power, along with their recreation of Judaism without a temple, the rabbis invented a new term: “Drash” (interpretation of Jewish Scriptures). Thanks to the “Drash”, the rabbis can decree whatever they desire, including twisting the biblical text and interpreting it according to their agendas.

THE SAGES TWISTED TEXTS TO CLAIM THE OPPOSITE MEANING, TO SUIT THEMSELVES

In Exodus 34:27, God says to Moses, “*Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you.*” But the Sages, who needed to assert the authority of their “Oral Law”, invented a new Drash, which decreed that the term “in accordance with” comes from the word “mouth”. According to them, this is proof that Moses was also given an “Oral Law” by God. However, this is not at all what God had said to Moses in this verse - if anything, the contrary is true! The meaning of “in accordance with” in biblical Hebrew as well as in modern Hebrew, is

simply “in accordance with”. God’s emphasis to Moses was on a covenant that was made in accordance with what was written. The Sages took that verse clearly saying that the written law is the basis for the covenant, and twisted it to say that what it meant was their “Oral Law” instead.

In Tractate Sanhedrin of the Talmud, the Sages isolated part of a verse from Exodus 23:2, “You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, nor shall you bear witness in a lawsuit, siding with the many, so as to pervert justice.” This verse carries a plain meaning, ‘Don’t go along with the crowd to do wrong, or to distort justice.’ But what did the Sages do? They isolated the words “fall in with the many” (go along with the crowd) out of context by ignoring the vital preceding words, “You shall not”! **They invented a new Drash, claiming that God instructed people to follow the crowd and go along with the rabbis.** According to this Drash, as long as the rabbis have a majority among themselves (the crowd), they can interpret and decree anything they want, while the people of Israel are obliged to follow them and their decrees blindly, no questions asked. One does not have to be a genius in order to see the intentional distortion here. They have taken a verse which warns against the dangers of following the crowd, and twisted it to say that the danger is in NOT following the crowd. The very opposite!

In the Talmud, Rabbi Joshua commented on this verse in Deuteronomy 30:11-12: *“For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?”* The verse says that according to God, the Law is not far-off in heaven or too complicated, but that it is close, for anyone to reach. But what did Rabbi Joshua do? He took three words out of the verse and gave them a new, twisted interpretation. He claimed that “*not in heaven*” means that the power and the authority is no longer with God in heaven, and even if he were to shout with a voice from heaven, he no longer has the authority, but the rabbis do.

Here is how the Talmud puts it: “Rabbi Joshua stood on his feet and said, “The Torah is not in heaven!”... We take no notice of heavenly voices, since God has already given the Torah, at Mt. Sinai.”

THEY HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES GREATER AUTHORITY THAN GOD.

It is written in Tractate Sanhedrin of the Talmud that Adam and Eve were told about the glory of Rabbi Akiva, and that after the flood, Noah's descendants studied the Sages' interpretations. But as we all know, during that time, the Bible could barely contain the first ten chapters of Genesis. The future events were yet to occur: Father Abraham was not yet born - neither was Moses. This self-willed effort to include the later interpretations of the rabbis, the "Oral Law", in the period of Genesis, is of course illogical and contradictory. But it most definitely serves its purpose very well: to draw Israel's attention to the rabbis. Just add a little "Drash" to the recipe and you can cook whatever you want... Sounds illogical? Well, according to the rabbis, the lack of logic in the Talmud is THE "proof" that it came from God.

As seen in Rabbi Gottlieb Fisher's explanation: "Human logic by itself could not have sentenced the death penalty or stoning on anyone who writes two letters on the Sabbath, or carries an object heavier than a feather over a distance more than four cubits in public. Without tradition inspired by God, human intelligence would have thought that only hard and tiring physical labor such as carrying rocks or chopping wood, or any other kind of hard labor, could be considered forbidden on Shabbat." Get it? According to Rabbi Gottlieb, the lack of logic in the commandments of the Oral Law, "proves", that it is from God.

In Isaiah 30:20, a promise is given to Israel that in the future, they will see God with their own eyes: "*But your eyes shall see your Teacher.*" Examine the following explanation given by the rabbis on safa-ivrit.org where they say, "In the Orthodox community, the acceptable understanding of this verse, is that a man should physically see his teachers and his rabbis."

Based on that misinterpretation, many display portraits of important rabbis in their homes with Isaiah 30:20 written on them, even though it says in the Ten Commandments "*You shall not make for yourself an image*".

The rabbis took a biblical verse out of its context, twisted its meaning and invented a new commandment... Yes – to make images... of themselves! But this was never the true meaning of the verse. This verse in Isaiah does not speak about many teachers, but about a single one. It does not speak about a teacher in the flesh, but about GOD. The prophet says that in the future, God will no longer be hidden from mankind, but will be visible for all those who wait for him. Is it clear now what the verse is saying? This shows the power of the “Drash” to mislead and conceal. Knowledge of biblical Hebrew or an understanding of the original intention of the writer is thrown aside ... All one needs for twisting this verse is to have an agenda.

The Sages' interpretation of Jewish scripture (the Drash) ... does it try to conceal Jesus from his people?

Yes, it does!

*"Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you,
and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you.
For the Lord is a God of justice;
blessed are all those who wait for him" (Isaiah 30:18).*



Chapter 45

The Psychological Power of Tradition over the Jewish people

(in rejecting Christ)

When Rabbi Akiva coined the phrase: “Tradition is a fence to the Torah” (Avot 3:13), it’s doubtful he imagined how the rabbinic tradition of the so-called “Oral Law” would influence the people of Israel throughout the generations. Rabbinic “Oral Law” has dominated the Jewish world to the degree that other variations or streams of Judaism present during the Second Temple period (such as the Sadducees, the Zealots, the Essenes and the Karaites) were all but wiped out. It’s been 2,000 years since the Pharisee sect took over the Jewish world, and Judaism has been identified with their tradition ever since, including all their ritual laws, symbols and customs. Because of that, rational claims demonstrating the lack of veracity of the “Oral Law” have no effect, as this ancient tradition has developed profound psychological ties with the Jewish soul over the years.

DON’T CONFUSE ME WITH THE FACTS,
MY MIND’S ALREADY MADE UP!

Even when all the facts show otherwise, well-established tradition can still have an incredible psychological power over the individual, influencing him so far as to deny the truth in order to protect himself from being labeled as “different” from the rest of the flock.

Researchers who were faced with the issue of the individual against ancient traditions have found that since religious traditions reflect the accumulation of cultural values and assets – both spiritual and emotional – the individual can become “a sort of slave to frozen traditions, customs, opinions and faiths that were acceptable since long ago, but their meaning,

in many cases, isn't clear or understood by him." (*Regard and Revere, Renew Without Fear: The Secular Jew and His Heritage*, The Poalim Library, 57: 1986). Religious tradition becomes the central anchor providing the individual with a specific lifestyle, thought habits and familiar behavioral patterns founded by his forefathers and which now apply to him. Therefore, it is no wonder that the Jewish people in Israel, even if they don't define themselves as "religious", cling to their religious tradition as the default psychological basis for their Jewish identity.

WHY ARE WE SO CHAINED TO TRADITION?

Tradition acts as an important link between the past and the present. In addition, relating to ancient tradition infers a pseudo-instinctive feeling, because every well-established and significant tradition is accompanied with an authority that the individual cannot oppose. The Talmud puts it this way: "If the earlier [scholars] were sons of angels, we are sons of men; and if the earlier [scholars] were sons of men, we are like donkeys" (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 112b,16).

Therefore, it is mandatory to accept the authority and tradition of the ancient Jewish Sages and their "Oral Law", to the degree that breaking these traditions is considered blasphemy - a sin, and a deviation from the Jewish spirit. Even secular Jews who have a weakened attachment to their religious heritage might feel detached when deviating from Jewish tradition in such a way that would not only cause them to have pangs of conscience, but also cause an instinctive defensiveness when encountering anything new or different that might threaten the ancient tradition their forefathers identified with. The power and influence of religious tradition comes from its conservative and stiff character; for this reason, even a secular man who firmly opposes religion can be compulsively influenced in a very deep, psychological way (sometimes without him even knowing) by the religious tradition his forefathers belonged to.

The Rabbinic monopoly defining what it means to be Jewish: The psychological roots of religion aren't easily erased, and the secular lifestyle in modern society will not completely save the individual from the tradition

identified with his Jewish heritage. Therefore, it's not a surprise to find many Jews who have disconnected themselves from the Orthodox lifestyle and belief in the living God, but who still keep following rabbinic customs out of their commitment to continue the traditions of their forefathers and a desire to preserve the unity of the nation of Israel, according to Professor Jacob Malchin (*What Do Secular Jews Believe?* The Poalim Library, 32: 2000). Under the authority of rabbinic Judaism, the uniqueness of the nation of Israel was expressed through the merging of nationality and religion. Nowadays, this merging no longer exists, meaning that a completely secular Jew is still considered a part of the Jewish nation. Still, the need of the secular Jew to have an attachment to the Jewish heritage of the nation of Israel keeps bringing them back to the arms of the rabbinic tradition.

As Dr. Ronny Bar-Lev, who researched the “Chassidic” belief discovered, the religious Jew, alongside his secular brother, finds himself in a situation where he isn’t required to verify the rabbis’ tradition, nor demand proof for the spiritual authority of the “Oral Law”. (*Radical Belief: The Avant-Garde Belief of Rabbi Nahman from Breslev*, Bar-Ilan University, 2017: 22). Thousands of years of tradition have also brought the religious person to follow the rabbinic commandments “on autopilot”, as “just another habit”, even if such religious practice would be completely godless. We can see another expression of this idea in Arik Parum’s book: *And You Will Be Like God*.

In other words, the Jewish feelings involved in the psychological process which create the longing for rabbinic tradition are more than enough to justify the blind faith in the “Oral Law” religion. Moreover, the rejection of any faith that may be considered threatening or foreign to the rabbinic tradition only serves to strengthen the Jewish man’s (whether religious or secular) innermost sentiments through which he preserves his Jewish identity. This matter has been thoroughly discussed by Professor Avi Sagi and Prog and Tsvi Zohar (*Jewish Identity Circles in the Religious Tradition*).

The Sages of the “Oral Law” ruled, “For anyone who repudiates idolatry is called ‘a Jew’”. It seems that behind this statement hides a rabbinic longing for a different extreme assumption: that any Jew who

repudiates the rabbinic tradition (thus falling into “idolatry”) isn’t considered a Jew. Releasing the people of Israel from the heavy burden of the rabbinic “Oral Law” requires not only rational refutation alone, for the Jewish nation today is still chained to this tradition - welded by historical, traditional and psychological links, from which it seems much harder to free themselves.



Chapter 46

Does God Care for Man-Made Traditions?

If we truly love our ancestors and our heritage, we need to honor it by being loyal to God and his Messiah.

Rabbi Daniel Asor accused Jesus of coming to sow hatred and cause war and division in the world. The rabbi says: “Even according to his own words, Jesus didn’t come to bring peace... but the sword. “Don’t think that I have come to bring peace to the world, but a sword...” Jesus didn’t come to give love to the world; he came to rob it.”

Here’s another quote: “*And he said to them, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor. ’’*

Was this from the New Testament as well? No, these are the words of Moses at Mt. Sinai. It’s very easy to isolate verses out of their context like Rabbi Asor does so well but the challenge is to understand the context in which they were spoken. Without a doubt, those words of Jesus and the words of Moses sound harsh. They appear to go against everything Jesus preached so many times and in so many ways throughout the New Testament in regard to love, forgiveness, grace and compassion. Rabbi Asor didn’t bother to note that the section he quoted is from **chapter 10 in the Gospel of Matthew.**

WHAT WAS JESUS REALLY SPEAKING ABOUT IN THAT CHAPTER?

The choice between following God or the traditions of men: The question of whether Jews should betray their traditions for Jesus is not an

easy question, but it is a simple question. One can choose to follow traditions invented by the rabbis, or choose to follow the Messiah – to follow God. When forced to choose between loyalty to family traditions and loyalty to God it makes sense for God’s people to remain loyal first and foremost to God - and this is what Jesus spoke about when he said he came to cause division. For many people in those days, choosing to follow him meant that their family would reject them, just as it is still happening today for Messianic Jews who declare their faith in Jesus. Very often, the family will threaten them with denial, separation and even with cutting them off from the family unless they deny their faith in Jesus. Faith in Jesus the Messiah separates between those who are genuine - willing to give it all and to follow God with all their heart, their soul and their might - from those who would rather follow the religious traditions of men: to follow the rabbis.

In the Gospel of Matthew chapter 10, Jesus warns those who will choose to follow him: “*for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you...*” (Matthew 10:17).

“*Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake.. they will persecute you...*” (Matthew 10:21-23).

“*So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known... And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul...*” (Matthew 10:26-28).

Now, more of Jesus’ words as they were quoted by Rabbi Asor, but this time within their context:

“*So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a*

daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.”

“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:32-39).

Following God with all our heart, our soul and our might is what Jesus requires. If we truly love our ancestors and our heritage, we need to honor it by being loyal to God and his Messiah. If you are yelling now that you will not leave the traditions of your ancestors, we want to remind you that this is exactly what Abraham did, he left his home and the traditions of his family in order to follow God.

The prophets in the Old Testament were not always loved by the people of Israel and especially not by the religious leaders. Often they were not properly understood and even their friends and family members rejected them. An example of this can be found in Jeremiah 12 where we read that because of Jeremiah's decision to follow God, his brothers and family betrayed him and raised a loud shout and cry over him. In other words, Jeremiah's family rejected him because they understood his dedication to God as a betrayal to their family traditions. And today, who among the prophets are respected and considered true prophets? Those who were liked by the people, by their families and by the religious leaders? Or the prophets who convicted the people of their sins?

For those who prefer to follow the majority, consider Moses in Exodus 32; While he was up on Mt. Sinai receiving the Law from God, the people of Israel chose to make themselves a golden calf. As a result, Moses declared the verses quoted earlier. He demanded that all those who participated in the construction of the golden calf should be destroyed: *“And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. And Moses said, “Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his*

son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day”” (Exod. 32:28-29).

Moses declared that God would bless those who choose to follow Him over their families. So if one applies Rabbi Daniel Asor’s words to Moses, in his opinion it seems that Moses also came ‘not to bring peace but a sword’, and not to give love to the world but to rob it for himself. And what about Rabbi Asor? After all, the tradition says that a Jew must “honor his rabbi more than his father”… Apparently, Rabbi Asor too, as a rabbi, came to rob love for himself and to divide between father and son…

Both Jesus and Moses insist on complete, uncompromising dedication and loyalty in our walk with God. Today, the traditions of the people of Israel are no longer based on the Old Testament, but on keeping the commandments and the traditions which the rabbis invented and continue to invent. They are not loyal to the God of Israel, since they reject his Messiah, Jesus.

Let’s be realistic, after you die you will stand alone before God. The rabbis won’t be there to hold your hand, and neither will your aunt or your teacher. You will need to give account to God on every choice you’ve made such as why you blindly went along with the traditions of men (their rules and “oral law”) rather than risking the rejection that comes from following God himself.

About 100 years ago, when Benjamin Ze’ev Herzl envisioned the establishment of the Jewish State and started the “World Zionist Organization”, his ideas were immediately rejected by the chief rabbis of Judaism. But Herzl didn’t give in to the rabbis and thanks to his efforts, fifty years later the State of Israel was born. When a young Jewish boy from Poland by the name of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda came to the conclusion that the Hebrew language should be fluently spoken among all Jews, his family threw him out of the house. The rabbis of his time resisted the idea that secular Jews would speak Hebrew. What language would be spoken in most of Israel today if Eliezer Ben-Yehuda had given in to the rabbis? And in what country would millions of persecuted Jews find refuge today if Herzl had given in to the rabbis?

Don't count on the rabbis and don't allow them to think for you. Don't let pressure from your family or fear of what others might think prevent you from following the truth – from following God. And that is exactly what Jesus was talking about.



Chapter 47

Is an Oral Law Truly Needed to Understand the Bible?

“There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them” (Joshua 8:35).

“The Myth of the Oral Law” video we made has reached over one million views. This chapter deals with that subject, and will reveal what’s wrong with the Rabbis’ claim that the written law of Moses cannot be understood without the rabbinic tradition clarifying it in the Oral Law.

Is rabbinic tradition (ie “The Oral Law”) essential for understanding the written law of Moses? This is what the rabbis want people to believe. In that way, people stay dependent on them. This dependency brings them power which also enables them to extort people and make a lot of money. But in the Bible God tells the people of Israel the exact opposite. From the beginning, **God made it clear to Israel that his commandments are not complicated**, so that in order to understand the written laws **there’s no need for a rabbi to explain them**.

“For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.” (Deuteronomy 30:11-14).

The biblical context clarifies what the original author meant. Therefore, according to the rules of biblical interpretation the biblical

commandments are based on the most simple reading of the text. There is nothing wrong with asking for help if more understanding is needed, but it's an unhealthy situation to be dependent on one person who allegedly is the only one with the authority to interpret. But that's what the rabbis want people to think.

The rabbis frequently make use of a logical fallacy that is an appeal to ignorance - an argument from ignorance: A logical mistake in which one tries to arrive at a conclusion from lack of knowledge or proof. For example, let's say I don't understand a commandment like, what is an "orla" (foreskin) and how do I need to cut it? Or, I don't know what a "sukkah" (booth) is, and what color it should be, what angle, or how to build it. Therefore, they tell us, there has to be an Oral Law that explains and interprets these details I don't know.

See what Rabbi Yossi Mizrahi says: "Listen up, there is a simple point to make here, the day you have an answer to it we'll continue the discussion. There are 613 written commandments and none of them contains an explanation on how to implement them. Nothing." This typical example was taken from a lecture by one of the most famous rabbis today, Rabbi Yossi Mizrahi, given in January 2017 in Ramat Gan. In this lecture, a 17 year-old boy had challenged Rabbi Mizrahi to prove the existence of an "Oral Law", after telling the rabbi that he had watched our video proving that no such thing was given to Moses by God at Mount Sinai. If there was such a thing, surely the rabbis would be in agreement about it. But they aren't.

THE RABBIS DON'T AGREE ABOUT THE MEANING OF BIBLICAL WORDS.

It's important to remember that today, thousands of years after the giving of the Law, it is very likely that people don't understand every word, or that people understand it differently than the original meaning. It's also important to remember that the biblical Hebrew the people of Israel used is similar but not identical to the modern Hebrew spoken today. But just because ancient words, terms, expressions or commandments are hard to understand, that does not mean the people who were alive at that time didn't

understand them either. For example, in Ezekiel 1 we find the word “khashmal”. Obviously, the meaning of “khashmal” at the time of Ezekiel and in the context of the text is not identical to its modern meaning, “electricity”. The word “khashmal” is a perfect example showing how the sages contradict one another. And therefore, their words cannot be “the Oral Law” passed on by Moses. The rabbis do not even agree with one another concerning the meaning of “khashmal”. Rashi says, that “khashmal” is the name of an angel. Rabbi Bahya Ben Asher, however, claims that it refers to animals. In Parshanut Metzudat David it supposedly refers to flames. Then again Abarbanel states that it means “prophecy”. Malbim, says that “khashmal” is God’s presence and furthermore claims that it is forbidden to accept Abarbanel’s interpretation. He says: “‘Khashmal’ – God forbid that we accept Abarbanel’s opinion.”

CONFUSING THING, THIS “ORAL LAW”.

Now ... a step by step examination of each claim from Yossi Mizrahi’s lecture.

The example of circumcision: “What’s an ‘orla’? How would you know what a ‘orla’ is? How did Moses know where to cut? It’s not written how to circumcise. How come they all knew where to cut?” (Rabbi Yossi Mizrahi).

Seems like Mizrahi forgot that the command of the circumcision was given to Abraham hundreds of years before the Sinai covenant, which supposedly was when the Oral Law was given together with the written Law. So did Abraham have a rabbi who traveled back in time in order to explain how circumcision is done?

According to Professor Nisan Rubin and Professor Binyamin Mazar the circumcision of the male is not only a Jewish phenomenon. It was a known tradition among the majority of peoples. In fact, in ancient times it was common also in the area of Egypt, Assyria and around the Mediterranean about 3000 years BC.

The example of Tefillin: “Tefillin”, (arm wrapping) continues Rabbi Mizrachi. “How come? How come they all put on black Tefillin all over the world?”

And how come that already for thousands of years, people in Asia make Sushi with sheets of seaweed? Maybe the Japanese also received an Oral Law with Sushi rules? When a certain tradition exists for thousands of years it does not mean that God ordered it. Actually, the word “tefillin” is not mentioned in the Bible at all. Rather, the sages took the word “totaphot” in Deut. 6:8 and claimed it referred to tefillin. However, anyone who compares the commandment of the “totaphot” in Deut. 6:8 with the identical commandment given earlier in Exodus 13:9 will see that the meaning of “totaphot” is actually a “reminder” or “memorial”. The commandment “as totaphot between your eyes” does not command people to put a box on their foreheads. Rather, it is a commandment to always remember God in your thoughts.

The example of Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles): “What is a ‘fruit of splendid trees’?” Asks Mizrachi. “It’s written that we need four of them, four kinds.”

Mizrahi doesn’t understand how to discern the meaning of “four kinds”, and in general, how to understand anything connected to Sukkot without the explanation provided by the Oral Law. First of all, in Deuteronomy 4 and 13 God warns not to add anything to the commands written in the Torah. *“You shall not add to the word that I command you”* (Deuteronomy 4:2). Therefore, even though the Bible doesn’t say exactly *how* to build the booth, they still do not have the authority to add to their own commandments, rules and regulations that can’t be found anywhere in the Bible. But that’s exactly what the Sages did. And as if that wasn’t enough they even did that in God’s name. So they need to be called to account for using God’s name in vain.

Why didn’t God give clear and detailed guidelines in the Torah for every little thing? For example, how the booths need to be set up, how big, at which angle, color and so on? Or which kind of “splendid” trees? Most likely for the same reason why God did not give all the flowers in the world

the same shape and color. He does not want everything to be done the same way and look identical. Look around at God's creation. The colors, shapes and smells show such an amazing variety. God is creative, and he made human beings in his image, with the capacity to create. We have the freedom and ability to express the creativity he put in each one of us.

GOD LOVES DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

If God did not let us know in which size or form, angle or direction the booth has to be set up then apparently that's not what's important to God. Rather, he left it up to us, to our imagination and creativity. Apparently, he did not want us to be fixed on a certain form, model or structure. Rather, he allowed us to express our creativity and individuality. **All that was important to God is that we'd remember that he brought us out of Egypt.**

The example of Shabbat: "It's not written in the Bible how to consecrate the Sabbath. It's not written in the Bible what 'work' is."

"You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day" (Exodus 35:3).

Pay attention to this, an action was prohibited: namely to light a fire. The fire is not the problem but all the effort that went into making a fire. Why? The context tells us. One verse earlier it is written: *"Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death"* (Exodus 35:2).

Note that the word "work" was mentioned twice, and not by accident. In Egypt, the people of Israel worked non-stop. Now, they are commanded not to work, to rest one day per week. It's a day set aside for God, family and rest. The lighting of a fire was considered work. Why? Not because God has a problem with fire, but because making a fire was a lot of hard work. In biblical times, unlike today, lighting a fire involved going off to find

wood, cutting down trees, schlepping the wood back to the camp, cutting it into smaller pieces, building a stack of wood and then trying to set the whole stack on fire. It was hours of hard physical work that should not be done on a Sabbath. Why? Because the Sabbath is for resting, relaxing, spending time with family and deeply considering God. It's a rest for the body and the soul.

All those rules that the “Oral Law” added … not to break a yogurt cup on the Sabbath, not to rip toilet paper, not to dry off, not to look into the mirror, and other ridiculous, rabbinical rules completely miss God’s purpose, and the actual goal of rest and renewal.

Did God give extra instructions about the tabernacle? Mizrachi claims: “Build it the way I showed you on the mountain, the way I showed you on the mountain – in general I showed you how to build the tabernacle. God showed things to Moses that were not written in the Torah. This is evidence for the Oral Law. It’s written in past tense, when I showed you – when I showed you then.” According to Rabbi Mizrachi, the wording “when I showed you” implies an oral transmission. Without noticing, out of all chapters he could have chosen, he chose one that proves the exact opposite of his claim, since Moses did write in meticulous detail and in numerous chapters ALL the commandments connected to the tabernacle. See Exodus Chapters 25 to 30, chapters 35 to 40, and it should be obvious that Mizrachi’s claim backfired on him. Moses actually does clarify, in writing, the way the tabernacle has to be built in all its details.

“WHAT WOULD THE SAGES GAIN FROM COMING UP WITH THOUSANDS OF RULES?”

Glad you asked! Let’s take for example Sukkot, the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles. The Rabbis are the only authority and have the right to determine for the people of Israel what a “kosher” Sukkah (booth) is, and what the four species are. What would the etrog sellers do without their customers being obligated to the rules of the rabbis? It turns out that religion is a lucrative business. The rabbinic tradition preserves and encourages this business, typical for other religions too, that gets validation from one source only. It functions like a monopoly or a cartel. For example,

according to the website “Kipa” the market of the “four species” alone has a turnover of tens of millions in one single week, once a year. Now imagine what could be done with the billions coming from Yeshivas and the kosher market, money coming from all over. We could have eradicated poverty in Israel. The same thing also applies to many other rabbinic customs and obligations. In simple words, the Rabbis gain power, control and money.

What's the agenda of the “Sages” behind the creation of thousands of rules? It gives them power and control over the people. It makes the people dependent on them alone and this brings in lots and lots and lots of money. Rabbinic tradition fails to explain the Bible to God's people, but succeeds in gaining exclusive control over people's lives.

Lastly, here's a challenge for Rabbi Yossi Mizrahi and the Rabbis in general. Can you answer these questions?

If, according to your logic, the written law cannot be understood without the rabbinic tradition explaining it to us, how then did Adam and Eve understand the meaning of the commandment?

“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

Or ... the commandment not to eat from the tree of knowledge?

“...for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

Was it possible for Adam and Eve to check in the Oral Law? Impossible, since according to the Sages the Oral Law was given together with the Torah at Mount Sinai thousands of years after the expulsion out of the Garden of Eden. Maybe Adam and Eve traveled into the future, studied at a rabbinical Yeshiva and traveled back to the past.

Twisted Drash? Religious coercion? Read on. There's more...



You can order Eitan Bar's and Golan Brosh's book on Oral Law at
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Chapter 48

What is the REAL Reason the Rabbis Reject Jesus?

“Jesus knew that the traditions they were inventing were not based on the scriptures, but based on fear and on their need to control the people: Or in other words, religious coercion.”

As human beings, we don't like to admit that we are wrong, and we especially don't like to admit that we are sinners. We like to feel special, important and valuable. Our human nature loves control and power. For this reason, nations go to war with each other or brothers from the same family might stop speaking to each other. Of course, you will not be surprised to know that 2,000 years ago the situation was not so different – religious hypocrisy and crookedness were commonplace back then too. When the love for power and control is mixed with religion, it becomes destructive and leads to pride and corruption.

Is it possible that the rabbis rejected Jesus and his followers and accused them of idol worship because they feared losing all their power and status if people believed in Jesus?

Even in the Old Testament period, God often rebuked the religious leaders of Israel. The Jewish Sages who came later were not immune from this hunger for power and control either. See for example what is written in the Talmud, tractate Erubin: “Whosoever disobeys the writers [rabbis] deserves death...” The rabbis demanded the death penalty for anyone who dared to defy them. Their desire for power and control is the motivation behind these kinds of statements. Historical researchers have found approximately twenty historical sources such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, and rabbinic writings that detail the corruption among the leaders of the people of Israel during the Second Temple period. A good example of this can be seen in the strong criticism found in the Babylonian Talmud,

Tractate Pesahim 57, against the corruption of the priestly families in the Land of Israel.

Jesus never disrespected the Law of God. He did not do anything, say anything, or teach anything contrary to the Law. The truth is that He said: *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them”* (Matthew 5:17). He did not, however, have any time for the man-made traditions that were invented and hallowed by the rabbis of his day. Jesus knew that tradition produces religion and that religion distances us from God and leads us to focus on what is unimportant – on meaningless deeds. You might be surprised to learn that in the Talmud there are some 3,000 laws on how to plant zucchini (squash), and that is even before we start to talk about how to cook or eat them! Jesus understood that the religious leaders in Israel were focussing on what was superfluous, and not on the essence – that they missed the heart of God.

Jesus knew that the traditions they were inventing were not based on the Scriptures, but based on fear and on their need to control the people: Or in other words, religious coercion.

Jesus reminded us what religion caused us to forget: God sees our heart; he is not impressed by all the particular positions we may adopt when we read from a prayer book. The angle in which we wrap our tefillin (phylacteries), might impress the people around us, but it doesn't impress God. As Jesus pointed out, while they wore elegant clothes on the outside, deep inside the hearts of the religious people of His day were rotten and far from God. He even called them “whitewashed tombs”. All they were interested in was position, power, control and money. And as we all know, in regards to this issue, the situation today is not much different... just open the newspapers and see.

WHAT IF JESUS MET ISRAEL'S LEADERS TODAY?

But just for a minute, let's forget about history. Imagine that the Messiah came today. Imagine what would happen if He approached the members of parliament, the Prime Minister and the President (the leaders of

Israel today) and challenged each one of them with a list of all their sins, deceptions and the crimes that they have committed against people and against God. What do you think their reaction might be towards this Messiah? Would they be happy and thank Him for coming to show them where they have been going wrong? Would they promptly agree to change their ways? Probably not. Most likely they would try to protect their honor and tell the people: “Do not believe Him! He is a liar and an agitator of hatred! He can’t even be Jewish and doesn’t belong here with us – away with Him!”

This was exactly the reaction among the leaders in the time of Jesus, but back then the ones with all the power in their hands were the religious leaders rather than politicians. The religious leaders didn’t like the fact that Jesus was jeopardizing their authority among the people. They were concerned about their honorable positions in the synagogues and the Sanhedrin. They were afraid that the people would stop admiring and respecting them. They didn’t want to give up the luxurious, comfortable lives that they had, so they decided to turn the people against Jesus, and therefore rejected the Messiah.

King David says, in Psalm 118:22, “*The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.*” It is interesting to learn that the ancient Jewish community of Essenes living in Qumran interpreted this verse as a messianic prophecy right before the time of Jesus. The builders, who are the people of Israel, would reject the Messiah. Hundreds of years later, in the New Testament, the apostle Peter interpreted this verse in the exact same way – that it was about Jesus.

That is why, to this very day, the question of whether Jesus is or isn’t the Jewish Messiah is not even considered a valid question – anything that a rabbi writes about Jesus will be based on prejudice and the assumption that Jews should not be allowed to read the New Testament. Bound by this same prejudice, other Jewish people will often come to the same conclusion that Jesus is not the Messiah. Just like a blind man leading a blind man, if there is a deep hole in their way, they will both fall into the same hole.

The rabbis don't want you to know about Jesus, so for 2,000 years they have been thinking up ways to conceal the truth about the most famous Jew who ever lived. The truth about Jesus is the best kept secret in Judaism.

HELP US GET THE SECRET OUT!

If my book was a blessing to you in any way, please leave a positive rating and review at this [page on Amazon](#) (goodreads.com will also be great) as the rabbis will try to flood the review section with negative comments to discourage people from reading it.

It would also be a great blessing if you can SHARE the link to this book on your social media profile, to help get the truth out. Thank you!

Eitan Bar

